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The Shape of Things

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ALTHOUGH GOVERNOR LANDON HAS NOW climbed on the crop-insurance band-wagon, there appears to be a vast difference between the scheme he has in mind and the plans being drawn by the Administration. Mr. Landon is intentionally vague, but seems to be thinking of insurance in actuarial terms, possibly to be carried out by the private insurance companies. Secretary Wallace, on the other hand, is more realistic in insisting that it is far too big an undertaking to be handled by private organizations. We have learned from the Social Security Act that a complicated, expensive form of insurance involving the accumulation of huge reserves may be worse than none at all. If crop insurance is to be cheap enough to attract the average farmer, it is probable that the insurer will have to take losses. Unlike the private companies the government can afford to do this, if only as a means of reducing relief costs. Mr. Roosevelt has gone beyond Landon, moreover, in recognizing that neither crop insurance nor land conservation will solve the fundamental problem of the ever-increasing number of landless tenants and sharecroppers. Whether cheap government credit will prove an adequate solution depends entirely on how cheap it can be made. Long-term mortgages at 3½ or 4 per cent would merely place the average tenant in permanent servitude to the government. An abundance of government money at 1 or 2 per cent, on the other hand, might usher in an agricultural revolution by returning the land to the men who work it.

*

THE REVOLT IN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS over the seating of the Ethiopian delegates indicates that the League has not been wholly taken over by the big powers. On September 18 Italy announced that it would consent to resume its seat at the council table if the Ethiopian delegates were refused credentials. The Credentials Committee contains nine members, usually drawn from the smaller nations, who carry on the perfunctory business of deciding on the right of delegates to sit. This time, however, the business was not perfunctory, and England and France were reluctantly obliged to provide two members of the committee before any others would consent to serve. As finally constituted, the committee was made up of representatives of England, France, the Soviet Union, the Netherlands, Greece, Czecho-Slovakia, Turkey, and Peru; and much to the chagrin of the first two, only Peru unequivo-

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cally supported them in opposition to Ethiopia. French pressure on Professor Gaston Jeze forced that fiery champion of the Negus out of the council room altogether. As a substitute, A. E. Colson, former American financial adviser at Addis Ababa, consented to serve. It is probable that the Credentials Committee refused to agree less out of a passion for simple justice than out of fear that the ouster might serve as a boomerang for other League members at a later day. It is proposed to refer the matter to the World Court, suspending the Ethiopian delegation pending an opinion. But to ask the court for an opinion requires a unanimous vote, and the Ethiopian delegation promises to vote no. A very embarrassing situation all around, particularly for Great Britain, which does not want to take the responsibility of forcing the Ethiopians out and wants still less to offend Mussolini by permitting them to remain. The Duce himself is reported to be exceedingly annoyed. For a Cæsar it is always annoying when right shows a tendency to prevail over might.

*

NEWS FROM THE SPANISH FRONT IS CLEARLY unfavorable to the government forces. Aided by superior equipment, the Moors and Foreign Legion under General Franco are reported to have captured the strategic city of Maqueda, while the troops of General Mola have made appreciable progress toward Bilbao and Santander. The government offensive against Huesca and Oviedo seems to be at a standstill. Although the government's desperate attempts to seize Toledo's Alcazar are strategically of minor importance, popular interest has centered chiefly on this battle. In making the terrible decision to dynamite the ancient fortress, the government appears to have been moved by a desire to strengthen the morale of the government forces by a decisive victory, and anxiety to release the well-equipped army of 5,000 men which has been held in Toledo to prevent the fascist force from emerging from the fortress and attacking the government's lines of communication. Many of the Alcazar's defenders have been killed in the dynamiting, but the remainder, if not carefully guarded, could cause damage to railroads, bridges, and telephone lines in the loyalists' rear. With thousands of fresh government troops being thrown into the battle along the Maqueda front and the loyalist air force once more on the offensive, it is probable that the decisive battles of the war will be fought this week.

*

TENSION BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN HAS been increased by the killing of a Japanese consular policeman at Hankow on September 19 and a near clash between Chinese and Japanese troops at Fengtai, near Peiping. The policeman was the fourth Japanese to be killed in China in less than a month, but the first instance in recent years of a Japanese official assassinated by a Chinese. Although four Japanese would seem few as compared with the thousands of Chinese slaughtered since the fateful incident of September 18, 1931, the Tokyo government is reported to have dispatched a naval expeditionary force to back up its demands on Nanking. Hitherto Chiang Kai-shek has given way to Japan whenever pressure was applied, but recent reports have indicated that he is preparing for eventual resistance. A decision to fight Japan would not be as suicidal as is commonly supposed. During the nine years he has been in power, Chiang has built up the finest fighting force in the history of China. He has hundreds of modern airplanes, together with tanks, artillery, and other modern equipment. A war with Japan would unify the country and bring to Chiang's assistance not only the Chinese Red Army, described by Mr. Hanwell elsewhere in this issue, but the large, well-trained forces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. Since the Japanese have not yet succeeded in establishing control over the whole of Manchuria, they would seem most unwise to attempt to take over additional sections of China now.

*

THAT EARL BROWDER WILL GO ON THE AIR over Station WCAE at Pittsburgh calls for three cheers and a loud horse laugh. The cheers are for the Federal Communications Commission, which decided that Mr. Browder, as Presidential candidate for a political party legally on the ballot in almost all the states, had as much right to make a political speech over the radio as any other candidate who could pay for the time, including Governor Landon. Station WCAE, which denied Mr. Browder the right to speak on August 28 on the ground that his party was controlled by the Communist International, was forced to eat its denial, and Mr. Browder will be heard on October 23 and 30, in addition to his broadcast on September 21. The horse laugh, of course, is for Mr. Hearst, who owns Station WCAE. After his latest apoplectic seizure over President Roosevelt's support from the Richberg reds and the Tugwell bolsheviks, not to mention Felix Frankfurter, the arch-Stalin of them all, it is amusing to think of Mr. Hearst being forced to permit the candidate of the Communist Party to speak over the Hearstian ether.

*

MR. SHAW IS ALWAYS AT HIS HAPPIEST WHEN he is engaged in a tiff. This time it is with the Catholic church, which is a pretty good tiffer itself; the occasion is the proposed motion-picture version of "Saint Joan." According to Mr. Shaw the screen version of the play was read by a group calling itself "Catholic Action," and not only innumerable words and phrases—including "God," "paradise," "halo," "damned," and "babes"—were marked for omission, but whole sections of the play, notably Joan's recantation of her recantation. Mr. Shaw rightly believes this to be censorship at its stupidest; unfortunately his alternative, federal censorship, has not been shown to be any better. But his challenge has been taken up with considerable loud-breathing by Catholics in this country as well as by the Hays office in Hollywood. Father Talbot, editor of *America,* thinks Mr. Shaw is muddled; Michael Williams, editor of the *Commonweal,* is even more unkind—he calls it just another Shavian publicity gag. Mr. Hays says that there is no such thing as Catholic Action, which is a slight error that may be

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pardoned an elder of the Presbyterian church; he adds that nobody in Hollywood ever thought of screening Mr. Shaw's "Saint Joan," and most important of all that there is absolutely no censorship before production on the part of Catholics or anybody else. The New York *Times,* however, gives the whole show away, we like to think with malicious intent. In its news story of September 15 the *Times* says that although a script of "Saint Joan" was not officially considered in Hollywood, it was reported that Joseph Breen had carried on "unofficial conversations about it." This is sometimes done, it seems, "to prevent a record being made."

*

CALIFORNIA FARM LABOR AND EMPLOYERS are moving toward a new showdown. The first clash came on September 16 in Salinas, in connection with a strike of lettuce workers. From all reports it followed the usual brutal course of a California mob of respectable citizens on a law-enforcement spree. About 250 citizens were deputized by the sheriff and sent through the city to disperse and drive out the pickets. Many of them were armed. They were accompanied by police who threw tear-gas bombs into the crowds of pickets, while the state highway patrol convoyed strike-breaking lettuce trucks. The workers of the Salinas Valley are strongly organized in the Fruit and Vegetable Workers' Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor. For three years the union has had contracts with the growers. This year, as a result of a statewide campaign by the Associated Farmers, a group of large growers and packers, the Salinas Valley farmers are refusing to renew union recognition. In other words the Salinas riot in the name of law and order was not a local or isolated incident but an indication of the way in which the growers intend to handle labor trouble wherever it crops up.

*

AN AROUSED CITIZENRY CAN ACT IN VARIOUS ways. The Black Legionnaires of Michigan have shown us one; the citizens of Highland Park, Michigan, have recently demonstrated a better. Last spring 75 per cent of the teachers of Highland Park, a suburb of Detroit, voted their lack of confidence in Superintendent of Schools Allen, and on the promise that there would be no political reprisals, campaigned actively against his reelection. With a majority of just 72 votes out of 4,000 he was, however, returned to office. Whereupon he immediately discharged 42 teachers because of his "lack of confidence in your ability to cooperate in a satisfactory manner." It took no time for Highland Park to translate resentment into action. A mass-meeting was called, a Citizens' Emergency Committee formed, resolutions adopted, petitions signed, and a subcommittee sent to mediate between the Board of Education and the teachers. Step by step the pressure of united public action forced the board and the superintendent to retreat. They didn't want to accept the arbitration of the mediating body, but they had to. They didn't want to give the teachers a hearing, but they had to. They didn't want to make any reinstatements, but first they made ten and later all but six. Here is a group of average middle-class Americans (the chairman of the Emergency Committee is a broker, a staunch Republican, and a member of the American Legion) setting an example of the power that lies in orderly collective action.

Recovery Takes the Stump

MR. HEARST'S attack on President Roosevelt indicates among other things that he is discouraged with the campaign made so far by his chosen candidate, Alf M. Landon. It also tops off a picture of confusion designed to make the average voter feel as Governor Landon must have felt when he found himself riding on a merry-go-round at the Kansas Free Fair while the calliope played "Happy Days Are Here Again."

What has happened to the Presidential campaign of 1936, which as late as July was touted as sure to go down in history as the closest and bitterest fight in years? A few weeks ago the issues seemed clear-cut, the candidates ranged on opposite sides of the field. Landon, advocating the open shop, seemed to be saying that the Liberty League, Hearst, and the right in general had decided that the time had come to make a fight to the finish on the radical tendencies which were undermining the American system. Labor rushed with renewed enthusiasm to Roosevelt's standard, since it had neither party nor candidate of its own. Even the Communist Party, while nominating its own candidate, made it clear that keeping Landon out was the main consideration. Only the Thomas wing of the Socialist Party remained true to socialism, thus providing the final paradox on the left. Mr. Thomas himself must be startled at times to find himself far to the left of the Communists, while the presence in his ranks of a group of the followers of the revolutionary Leon Trotsky gives an added fillip to the present role of the gradualist Norman Thomas.

But if confusion finds its strangest forms on the left, it is no less rampant on the right. Mr. Landon's open-shop speech, though cold and dull, had the merit at least of being relatively clear and firm. Since then what seemed like fixed issues have shifted like twigs in a rising river. The freshet which has set everything loose from its moorings is of course the continuing recovery. It is flowing through a bed long dry with depression. On its surface float issues, candidates, and voters irresistibly drawn toward the middle. Business interests, reports the New York *Times,* appear indifferent to the outcome of the election! "Some signs of pre-election hesitation," it reports, "should be discernible in industry at this point, but after passing through a summer when there was not the usual slackening, it now appears that even a national campaign will have little effect upon the upward surge of business." It seems hardly likely that the Hearst headlines can offset the propaganda of rising profits.

Mr. Roosevelt, of course, is the gainer all along the

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line. Having taken labor into camp he has not needed to make any gestures to the left which might frighten the middle class. On the contrary, in proposing a power pool in the Tennessee Valley he is taking a tack which will tend to mollify the public-utility crowd and will not arouse the criticism of his supporters if only because the issues involved are complicated and have been given little publicity. His proposed conferences with business leaders are part of the same tack. He will probably continue to make "non-political" and highly literary speeches about green pastures and point to the increase in farm income.

One eloquent guide to the effect of recovery is the course of the Landon campaign. At the beginning the dominant note was a "common-sense" crusade on un-American practices, put forth to be sure in the guise of a defense of true liberalism and true democracy against the "autocracy" of the New Deal. Recovery having dulled both the voter's fear of autocracy and the business man's passion for a change, Landon slid, and was allowed to slide, back into his true character as a mild liberal. In recent speeches he has been offering not an end to government spending and interference but merely less of both. The relative positions of the two candidates were strikingly illustrated on September 18 when Roosevelt was celebrating freedom of the mind in the magnificent setting of the Harvard Tercentenary, rich with scholarly prestige and American traditions, while Landon was pleading for a "free America" in the vastly less impressive purlieus of the Topeka City Auditorium.

But if Landon was allowed to go his way, Knox was also given his head by the Republican Party. While the Presidential candidate was courting the liberals, denouncing teachers' oaths, and admitting that there has to be some government regulation of business, Colonel Knox has been trying to continue the fight in the spirit set by Landon's open-shop speech. The Colonel has come to seem quainter and quainter with his advocacy of employee stock ownership as a solution for our troubles and his admonition to labor to stay out of politics. It was not even quaint, however, when the Colonel made the statement that today no life-insurance policy or savings-bank account is safe. He not only went against the strong recovery psychology. He also gave the Democrats a chance to say that on September 28 it would be a whole year since a national bank had failed, and put himself in the same class as Father Coughlin, who also thinks that the banks are broke. No wonder Herbert Hoover, attending a meeting of the directors of the New York Life Insurance Company, refused to comment on his fellow-Republican's demagogic talk.

As we write, the election is six weeks off and the campaign is entering a new phase. Al Smith has announced an anti-New Deal speaking tour, Hearst apparently is about to conduct a red-hunt, and Landon is preparing for a new foray. But Al Smith and Hearst are not what they used to be, and Landon is not what he was cracked up to be. The President, meanwhile, is said to be planning fewer and fewer speeches. Obviously he intends to let recovery speak for him—and recovery has a golden tongue.

Stay Out of Germany!

HOW safe is an American citizen in Germany? For that matter how safe from the Nazi police is an American citizen on American territory? These questions arise out of the case of Lawrence Simpson, born in Chicago, for fifteen months a prisoner, first in the Fuhlsbuttel concentration camp near Hamburg, and now in Moabit Prison in Berlin. Simpson is an American seaman who was taken from his ship, the Manhattan, in Cuxhaven harbor on June 28, 1935. His locker was searched, alleged Communist documents were found in his possession, and he was seized forthwith. (Incidentally Simpson has never engaged in Communist propaganda while in the United States and has never been accused by the police of such activities.) Charges of treason and espionage were preferred against him, although the indictments have never been made public. The first charge was based, according to the police, on the documents found in his locker; the basis of the second charge has not been revealed. Simpson's trial was first scheduled for late in July of this year, but since that was evidently uncomfortably close to the Olympic Games, it was postponed until September 28. He will be tried in the German People's Court, at a trial from which foreigners and the public generally will be excluded except for an unofficial observer sent by the State Department. His lawyer has been appointed by the court. During his incarceration he has seen no one except the American consul and one other American, Gifford Cochran, who attempted to obtain for him an American attorney who would be associated with his Nazi lawyer. The interview with Cochran, however, took place in the presence of a Nazi guard and a none-too-friendly American consul. Mr. Cochran was not permitted to ask Simpson anything about his arrest. It is small wonder that the prisoner, suspicious of everybody, politely refused to have anything to do with him.

About a month after Simpson's arrest representations were made to the American State Department, which promptly promised that "the American authorities in Germany will render Mr. Simpson all appropriate assistance." This assurance, however, has borne little if any fruit. The case so far is being handled by the Bureau of Western European Affairs. The bureau points out that German law provides that an American citizen, if he makes invidious remarks about Hitler in America, may be arrested and charged with treason if he enters Germany. But the fact that Simpson not only was arrested on an American ship, which is American territory, but has been held so long without a trial, seems to the Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, which is attempting to defend him, to involve a violation of international law. The committee cites President Cleveland's speech of 1886 in which, referring to citizens charged with crime committed in a foreign land, he declared that "a fair and open trial . . . will be demanded for them." It also quotes from the proceedings of the Baldwin case between the United States and Mexico in 1842: "If Mexico wishes to main-

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tain rank and fellowship among the civilized nations of the earth she must place her laws on a footing with the laws of other nations, so far as related to intercourse with foreigners."

In other words, it is the privilege of Nazi Germany to hold its own citizens under "protective arrest" for as long as it pleases, although individuals in other nations may unofficially criticize such action as unwise and unjust. But when it so treats a foreigner whose own country has not yet forgotten habeas corpus and trial in open court, the situation demands more than individual protest. The American Department of State, in addition to sending an "observer," should be urged to make a vigorous diplomatic protest against this high-handed treatment of a citizen of the United States.

Newton D. Baker and the Last War

NEWTON D. BAKER'S eighty-six-page article in *Foreign Affairs* depicting the reasons, as he sees them, for our entry into the World War is a nice illustration of the ancient art of setting up a straw man and then demolishing it with a show of valor. Mr. Baker has heard a great deal recently about munitions makers, bankers, and foreign loans, and is apparently incensed at the idea that such influences could have affected the Wilson Administration in its decision to wage war on Germany. With a naivete that ill befits a former Secretary of War, he interprets the economic argument in anthropomorphic terms and sets out to prove that neither President Wilson nor any member of the Cabinet was aware of, much less susceptible to, the direct influence of munitions makers or international bankers.

On questions of fact Mr. Baker is ordinarily very scrupulous. Consequently it is extremely mystifying to find no reference in his detailed analysis to the famous Sunrise Conference of April, 1916, which is described elsewhere in this issue. It is possible that he did not know of the conference at the time, but it seems hardly likely that he has not run across references to it in his recent researches. The omission is significant, for the Wilson who could have called such a conference has little in common with the Wilson whom Mr. Baker describes as being preoccupied at that very time with the vision of America's special mission as peacemaker in a warring world. In fact, Mr. Baker declares categorically that there was nothing in German-American relations between May, 1916, and the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare in January, 1917, which threatened serious trouble. He pictures the submarine campaign as coming at a time when the President was still hopeful that the war might be ended without victory for either side.

Apart from this, there is little in Mr. Baker's elaborate exposition to which exception can be taken. Nearly half the article is given over to a résumé of the immediate causes of friction between the United States and Germany. Mr. Baker reviews the diplomatic correspondence between the two countries in great detail, and is able to show, triumphantly, that nothing is said about the Morgans, the armament makers, or the basic economic forces which have been discussed in recent years. The notes to Germany dealt almost exclusively with legal questions pertaining to America's neutral rights and were in a lofty tone far removed from such mundane matters as trade, profits, and loans. Mr. Baker admits that there may have been bankers who were pro-Ally, but ridicules the idea that any of them could have had any direct influence on the President.

It is probably true that neither the President nor Mr. Baker was aware of any attempt by financial or business leaders to bring the United States into war. Yet only an incredibly naive person would insist that an individual's utterances, public or private, may be taken as accurately reflecting the forces which impel him to action. Doubtless Mr. Wilson had reason to be suspicious of the bankers after their fight on the Federal Reserve Act. If they had come to him directly and pleaded that the United States declare war on Germany, he would certainly have refused. But this does not mean that the forces which caused the bankers to desire war did not also affect the President. On the contrary, it is quite clear that he was driven, step by step, into actions which made war inevitable. The first step was a negative one. In the interest of general prosperity no effort was made to limit American exports of raw materials and war supplies, even though it was apparent that this trade was advantageous to the Allies. Mr. Baker himself points out how a year later it was suddenly discovered that a loan to the Allies was necessary if this trade was to be maintained and a serious depression to be avoided.

From this point the die was cast, although Mr. Baker insists that "no one for a moment considered any departure from our rights and duties as a neutral." The United States was placed in a position where it had no choice but to defend its "right" to trade. Once this step was taken, Germany's unrestricted submarine campaign was certain to follow; some measure had to be taken to stop American assistance to the Allies if there was to be any hope for ultimate victory. Even when faced by the threat of an "illegal" submarine attack, President Wilson, if he had really wanted to prevent war, could have withdrawn all American ships from the war zone and prohibited American citizens from traveling on belligerents' ships. Why did he not do so? Mr. Baker does not directly meet the issue but implies that it was because the United States "declined to yield to any aggression upon its rights as a neutral which involved the loss of American lives." But what was there about our neutral "rights" that justified our plunging into a conflict that was to take 50,000 American lives and cost more than $25,000,000,000? It is begging the question to say that we had warned Germany and had to back up our threat. We had warned the Reich because we were determined to preserve not abstract "rights" but an extremely profitable trade in war supplies. Words, Mr. Baker, are used as frequently to conceal as to express realities.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Can the Presidency Be Bought?

Washington, September 21

PRIMARY returns, registration figures, and the straw-vote crop to date leave little room for doubt that Roosevelt will be reelected in handsome fashion on November 3, but that little room is thoroughly and efficiently filled by a single question: "Isn't it still possible for big business to buy the Presidency for Alf?" My own belief is that the answer is no. I hold that the Presidency—at least this year—is not purchasable and that, even if it were, the price would be too high for the Liberty League. But I do not urge that belief upon you here. My purpose, instead, is to set down a few clinical notes and let you draw your own conclusions.

The first thing with which you must acquaint yourself is the part which money actually plays in campaigns. There seems to be a popular superstition that it is used to buy votes. As a matter of fact, the amount of outright vote-buying in a Presidential campaign is negligible; it is a practice in which political bosses and their employers can afford to indulge only in small election contests where the electorate is not emotionally aroused and the difference between the contending candidates is scarcely discernible to the naked eye. The money that counts is spent not on buying votes but on getting out the vote, and the rest is spent on propaganda. Enormous sums are spent on printing or broadcasting the output of the campaign committees' research and publicity divisions, and most of it is stupid, ineffectual stuff. At best the output of one division tends to do nothing more than cancel that of its rival; only the appeals to racial, religious, and class prejudice click in substantial fashion, and these must be handled not only gingerly but also subterraneously, for they cut both ways. The money that counts, the money spent on getting out the vote, goes for hiring cars to take voters to the polls and for hiring runners to see that the cars are kept busy and filled. Some of this money, and no inconsiderable part, goes into the pockets of ward-heelers and other professionals whose chief stock in trade is their ability to make friends with a controlling minority of the residents of their bailiwicks, and much of that money is spent in turn on cultivating these friendships by providing the residents of ward and precinct with sandwiches, cigars, free beer, and clubrooms in which to hide away from their families, play poker, and acquire the feeling of being wise and valued members of the community.

The belief of those who lay out the dough in this manner is that the friendships so cultivated are transferable and that a substantial number of the citizenry who have enjoyed the hospitality and confidences of the precinct captain or ward boss automatically will mark their ballots for the candidates whom they have heard praised by their friend and benefactor. Sometimes the belief is baseless; it it less likely to be so if the professional leader has been more than a jolly host. If he has been able to get parking tickets torn up, a street paved, an alley repaired, a son freed from police clutches, or jobs for the faithful, the loyalty and size of his following are many times the capacity of his till to buy. And unfortunately for the Republicans in the present campaign, what the Democrats lack in cash they more than make up for in ability to do the favors that make votes, for they not only have control of the federal government but also hold the reins in a majority of state, county, and municipal governments.

For that same reason the Democrats also have the edge this year in getting the small money that fills the chinks in campaign coffers. There is a vast army of men and women holding civil jobs under them, and they will be tapped for contributions, down to and including the janitors and charwomen. Most of the small money comes from this source, and prior to 1932 its output poured into the Republican till. The rest of the petty cash comes from the emotional fringe of the so-called independent voters and from fanatical party loyalists, but the contributions from these two sources divide themselves about equally between the two major parties. The big money comes of course from the only possible source—the men and corporations that have it to give.

The size of their donations is determined not only by the depth of their purses but by the tax laws, which also to a certain extent govern the manner in which they distribute their largess. If you examine the lists of contributions at the end of the campaign, you will notice few individual gifts in excess of $5,000. But you will note that in many instances each member of a family has donated $5,000 and also that some individuals have given many times $5,000 but have distributed it in parcels of $5,000 each to several different campaign organizations. The federal gift tax allows an exemption of $5,000, with the result that a man who gave $20,000 to the Republican National Committee would be taxed on $15,000 but would escape the tax if he gave $5,000 to the National Committee, $5,000 to the Liberty League, $5,000 to the National Jeffersonian Democrats, and $5,000 to the Republican gubernatorial campaign committee in his home state. And perhaps you will discern in this some explanation why the Morgans, Rockefellers, Sloans, and du Ponts donated $50,000 to the Republican campaign in Maine in lots of $5,000 or less apiece instead of contributing direct to the Republican National Committee, where their bid for a Republican victory in Maine could have been kept hidden from the Lonergan committee and escaped publicity on the eve of the election in that state.

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You will also note, if you examine the list of contributions to the Liberty League, that the tax laws play their part in yet another way. You will discover that a huge proportion of the league's working capital is made up of "loans." Most of these loans mature immediately after election. If the league is unable to repay them, their makers will have to write them off as bad debts and will then be entitled to deduct them from their income-tax returns, a thing that would not be possible if they had been "contributions." When the Liberty League reported to the clerk of the House a few days ago that its receipts between January 1 and August 31 had totaled $384,847, it set down among its receipts more than $90,000 in "loans" from seven different du Ponts. Others reported included "loans" of $10,000 apiece from Alfred P. Sloan, John J. Raskob, and Ernest T. Weir, and of $15,000 apiece from J. Howard Pew and George M. Moffett.

You will be foolish if you think that in the present campaign all the big money, considering its general source, will be piped exclusively into Republican, or anti-Roosevelt, coffers. The rich are not all Roosevelt haters. Joseph M. Patterson, publisher of the New York *Daily News,* already has given $20,000 to the Democratic National Committee and leads its list of donors. Ambassador Bingham, doubling his 1932 contribution, has given $10,000. Joseph P. Kennedy, who played party angel in 1932 to the tune of $50,000, and Vincent Astor, who gave $25,000, are only a few of the loyal pursemasters who have not yet disgorged but surely will. They will be followed by the usual horde of seekers after Cabinet posts, ambassadorships, standing invitations to the White House, and tax, tariff, and illegal legal favors. Then, too, as the campaign nears its climax and the fats cats backing Landon become more doubtful that they have put their money on the winning entry, there will be a rush to hedge those bets; corporations whose presidents have given thousands to the Landon campaign will produce vice-presidents eager to put up at least a few thousands for Roosevelt.

Already some of the market letters put out by financial houses are breaking the news to their clientele that Landon's chances, never good, are growing steadily worse and that Roosevelt's reelection is inescapable. There is even a chance that the money tide already has begun to turn. It seems to be definitely true that, lavish though the Landonward flow of funds has been, it has fallen far short of Republican expectations. Persons indubitably close to the Republican high command report that men from whom thousands had been expected have come through with hundreds. One of the party's solicitors of high-powered cash tells me he has found more than a few rich men who are afraid to give in proportion to their hatred of Roosevelt. They are afraid, he says, that Roosevelt will win in any event and that he will single out for some dire punishment all those who have registered in the upper bracket of Republican contributors this year. This fear, it seems, feeds upon a widespread belief that Mr. Roosevelt's consistency on the power issue is traceable solely to his knowledge of the power trust's grandiose expenditures in the fight to beat him four years ago. It is noteworthy in this same connection that the G. O. P. contributors' list so far is lacking in names of prominent utilities magnates and that a power-trust lobbyist recently informed me, in a moment of bibulous frankness, that his employers were afraid to put heavy dough on Landon and would knight any man who could tell them how to place their money in John D. M. Hamilton's hands without getting caught.

It is not possible now and it never will be possible to make an accurate estimate of the amount of money the campaign to defeat Roosevelt will draw. Reports thus far filed with the clerk of the House show that approximately $3,000,000 has been spent to date on the Republican side, as against a little over $1,500,000 on the Democratic side. Both sides will file another set of reports a few days before the election. In its election-eve report four years ago the Democratic National Committee registered campaign receipts totaling $1,441,117 as against $1,454,179 for the Republicans. Both sides already have passed those marks with the election six weeks away, and the campaign is just beginning to move into the final phase when purse-strings become ropes of sand.

Harvard's United Front

BY JOSEPH BARNES

Cambridge, September 19

TO the surprise of almost no one, the ambitious plan of Harvard University on its three-hundredth birthday to synthesize the specialized branches of modern scholarship into a unified and coherent system of thought and belief progressed no farther than the titles of the symposia. Even the most remarkable assemblage of scholars ever to gather in the United States, including eleven Nobel Prize winners and representing institutions which span the entire genealogy of the university tradition from Abelard to Antioch, could not produce from all their academic mortarboards the white rabbit of spiritual and intellectual unity.

But this is not to say that the Harvard tercentenary conference did not have large meaning for America both as symbol and as fact. As the first it was a reminder, at a time when many of its graduates may have needed a gentle hint, that Harvard, like the nation it helped to build, was conceived in dissent and developed in the spirit of rebellion. As fact it was notable for the open expression of

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ideas which have become in recent years steadily more repugnant to the groups in American life which Harvard College is supposed to represent.

The very organization of the symposia in the social sciences and the humanities represented a striking departure from the traditional procedure of learned congresses. After physiologists and psychologists had discussed Factors Determining Human Behavior, the conference moved as a whole unit to a group of symposia on Authority and the Individual. The state and economic enterprise, stability and social change, the place and functions of authority in life, and finally classicism and romanticism as illustrating the central intellectual problem of the eighteenth century formed the pattern within which social scientists went to work. Finally, except for the physical and biological sciences, the conference closed with a series of symposia for the humanists under the cumbersome, yet for American letters meaningful, title of Independence, Convergence, and Borrowing in Institutions, Thought, and Art.

The contributions were made for the most part by specialists preeminent in their fields. As the Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, John Harvard's school, pointed out at the close of the conference, the Western educational system, by its largess of learning to poor scholars on the basis of competitive examination, has speeded up the trend toward specialization. With a few notable exceptions, such as John Dewey, Dr. Etienne Gilson of the Sorbonne, and Professor Masaharu Anesaki of the University of Tokyo, few of the scholars could go farther than a vague indorsement on what proved to be the central and recurring theme of the conference—a realization of the need for an intellectual unity as stable and as universal as that which Christendom enjoyed in the Middle Ages.

Yet this was something. And before the tercentenary celebration closed on Friday with President Roosevelt among the 5,000 alumni in attendance, the problems of the contemporary world had already reared their ugly heads.

For the discussion of the state and economic enterprise, the conference brought together three distinguished economists—Wesley Clair Mitchell of Columbia, Dennis Holme Robertson of Cambridge, and Douglas Berry Copland of the University of Melbourne. All three acknowledged the growing trend around the world toward collective interference with the patterns of economic life, and all three found in it promise of a richer life for human beings. Dr. Edward Corwin of Princeton University, a former president of the Political Science Association, spoke of the Constitution and the Supreme Court in words which the Liberty League could accept only as treason. Professor Anesaki challenged the whole tradition of Western culture as based on exploitation.

Much that was said by liberals at the conference was phrased in scholarly obliquity which left conclusions to be drawn by those who wanted them. The sessions of the alumni association of the Graduate School of Business Administration captured the true spirit of medievalism more successfully than all the regalia which Harvard College and its invited guests could muster. But in the social sciences and the humanities there were fewer stuffed shirts and more rolled-up sleeves than anyone had expected. With honorary degrees from Harvard awaiting them at the end of the conference, many of the invited guests in the liberal arts rivaled their colleagues in the physical and biological sciences in the toughness of their empiricism and in the roughness with which they handled some of the traditions long since grown mellow in American learned journals.

It was partly its heavy foreign tinge which accounted for the conference's careless way with some American totems and taboos. But there was enough reminiscent speech-making about Harvard's own three hundred years to point again in fresh terms the old paradox of Harvard College as a breeding place of radicals and dissenters and at the same time a private tutoring school for the aristocracy of New England.

"The very name of Harvard is stench in the nostrils of fundamentalists, patrioteers, fascists, and Nazis," the tercentenary's official historian, Professor Samuel Eliot Morison, reported. The names of Henry Thoreau and Theodore Parker and John Reed were mentioned in the proud surveys of Harvard's past with which the conference closed as often as those of any other of its graduates. The Adamses placed five men in an unofficial Hall of Fame of Harvard men selected for the occasion, and none of them was wrapped in patriotic mist.

At the same time, the financial and industrial groups in American life which in the last hundred years have made Harvard rich and powerful were represented at the conference. Both their State Street core from Boston and the younger branches by which Harvard has become tied to the industrialism of the continent beyond New England gave to the closing days of the celebration especially the authentic ring of a national and not a parochial festival. Economic royalists sang "Fair Harvard" in chorus with members of the Brain Trust, and the only dissonances audible in a week of dignified festivity were those inevitable to age and class reunions and a fitful September wind among the elms.

The explanation of the paradox may lie in Harvard's venerable three centuries or in the three open books bearing the word VERITAS which President Dunster in 1643 adopted as the college arms. It is more likely that it is to be found in the kind of emotional and intellectual synthesis, unconsciously developed for sections of American life, which Harvard's invited scholars were assigned consciously to seek for the entire world in the academic discussions which made up the bulk of the celebration. This synthesis, it may be, will no longer hold for Harvard. This was a retrospective pageant of the past, and newspapers and primary elections served to remind at least some of the delegates that there are new forces in American life threatening to break out of the Harvard pattern. But in the search for a new unity for the world, Harvard has made an impressive demonstration that scholars may turn for evidence of how such unities are formed and nurtured not only to the Middle Ages but to America's own past.

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Are Annuities Safe?

BY MAXWELL S. STEWART

THREE times within the past fortnight I have been besieged by agents who were anxious to sell me an annuity. Now the arguments for an annuity are far more intriguing than those for an ordinary life-insurance policy. Instead of taking money from you during your entire lifetime which is to be repaid to your survivors, if any, after your death, the annuity provides a guaranteed fixed income for life. In the case of life insurance, you can only beat the company by dying soon, so that your beneficiaries can collect more than you paid in. With annuities, on the other hand, you can win if you live longer than the company expects you to. A few hundred Methuselahs, if they had the wisdom to buy substantial annuities, might wreck any life-insurance company.

The principle behind the annuity is extremely simple, and is just the reverse of that behind ordinary life insurance. On the basis of experience, the insurance companies know, or think they know, just how long the average man of a given age is likely to live. Consequently they are willing to enter into a contract under which in exchange for a lump sum they will pay a fixed amount of money each year for life. The amount of the required deposit naturally varies with the annuitant's age, being high if he is young and reasonably low if he is of advanced age. Theoretically it represents the sum which, with accumulated interest at a given per cent (usually 3 or 3¼), will last just long enough to meet all payments and provide a small margin sufficient to defray the company's overhead. There are many variants. Instead of paying a lump sum, one may pay so much a month until sixty or sixty-five and then receive a fixed income for life. There is a joint-survivors annuity which provides that the income, naturally a somewhat smaller one, shall continue until the death of a husband and wife.

The idea of a secure income for life, even though it be small, is attractive to almost anyone, but there is something about the zeal of the agents which arouses suspicion. What lies behind the sudden anxiety on the part of the companies to sell annuities when formerly they tended to play down this type of business? The heavy losses which everyone has suffered in other forms of investment may account, in part, for the public's increased interest in annuities. But why the sudden emphasis on annuities by the insurance companies? The New York Life Insurance Company, to take only one example, collected $41,654,538 on annuities in 1935 as against only $30,898,349 in premiums on new life insurance. Although they are still overshadowed by the $193,000,000 receipts in old life insurance, annuities are coming to represent a far from inconsiderable portion of the company's business.

One rather obvious fact may explain why the annuity leaped to prominence during the depression. Annuities bring in spot cash, and during the depression many of the insurance companies were sadly in need of cash. On paper they have always been more than solvent. Even at the worst stage of the crisis their reserves and surplus totaled approximately twenty billion dollars. But like all other financial institutions their assets were tied up in investments which could not be liquidated except at large losses. About 40 per cent less insurance was written in 1933 than in 1929, but the payments to policy holders in settlement of death claims, matured endowments, annuities, surrendered policies, and dividends were more than 50 per cent higher than in the boom year. Moreover, there was a tremendous demand for cash in the form of requests for policy loans. None of the large companies failed, but in New York and other states insurance commissions forced them for a time to refuse policy loans except in cases of dire necessity. In need of ready cash, it is only natural that they should have looked around for a new source of income that would restore their liquidity. Whether by plan or accident, annuities fulfilled this purpose.

Taken at its face value the annuity appears to be an ideal form of investment. It involves a minimum of effort and worry on the part of the annuitant. It is devised to afford the maximum security in life, and is a logical supplement to life insurance. No other gilt-edged investment promises such a high return. With savings banks paying 1½ to 2 per cent, and long-term government bonds yielding only 2.75 per cent, why not take advantage of a guaranteed rate of 3 or 3¼ per cent? Thousands of wealthy men have done that very thing.

Before leaping, it seems wise to consider the possible disadvantages. In the first place, there is the question of liquidity. Irrespective of what the agent may say, a lump-sum annuity ties up one's money irrevocably. Regardless of what happens it cannot be recovered during the lifetime of the annuitant. The instalment variety is nearly as bad. If you deposit $100 as a first annual payment, the most that can be reclaimed during the year is $60. During the second year, after two such deposits, only $154 may be recovered; and it may be as much as ten years before the full amount, less interest, may be obtained. This is an important consideration for anyone who does not have liquid funds immediately available for a possible emergency, and it is also extremely relevant in case of inflation. (If you want to see a life-insurance agent lose his composure, merely utter the word "inflation.") For all its merits, an annuity is obviously the very worst possible type of investment in the event of a sudden skyrocketing of prices. In exchange for $1,000 the insurance company can guarantee you, say, $54 a year. But it cannot guarantee what that $54 will buy. Even a mild rise in prices, such

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as we have had in the last three years, can play havoc with an agreement of this kind. A man who invested $1,000 in an annuity in the spring of 1933 has already lost more than 10 per cent of his investment owing to the reduced purchasing power of his money. The same $1,000 turned into real estate, wheat, copper, or stocks would have a greater buying power today than it had three years ago.

In case of inflation the annuitant would have at least a good chance of getting his money back. Without it the prospect does not seem quite so favorable. The present annuity contract provides for a payment of 3, 3¼, or 3½ per cent interest. In order to fulfil this contract the company obviously must find an investment which yields at least this high a return. Prior to the depression this was not difficult. There were a number of excellent investments available to life-insurance companies, including railway bonds, real-estate mortgages, and the obligations of states, counties, and municipalities, which paid 5, 6, and even 7 per cent. Today there are extremely few satisfactory new investments paying as much as 3½ per cent, and long-terms interest rates are steadily declining. Most of the companies have a substantial share of their funds in government bonds, although the maximum yield on these securities at present prices is 2.75 per cent. The return on first-class state, municipal, and railway-equipment bonds is but slightly more. As I write, the state of Rhode Island is issuing fifteen-year bonds which yield less than 2 per cent, and the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Equipment Trust is marketing ten-year certificates that offer a return of just 3 per cent. In the mortgage field the insurance companies must meet the competition of the government-financed Federal Savings and Loan systems and the Farm Credit Administration, which means that the day of the 5½ or 6 per cent mortgage is definitely over. New mortgages pay no more than 4 or 5 per cent, and it is extremely difficult for the companies to obtain any volume of sound investments at these rates. Policy loans at 6 per cent constitute by far the most attractive investment obtainable today, but with the restoration of better economic conditions these have dropped off. At the recent conference of insurance executives at the White House, it was reported that loans to policy holders, which had totaled approximately 18 per cent of the insurance companies' resources in 1933, had declined to 14 per cent of the aggregate resources. This means another sharp loss to the companies.

It simmers down to this. If I buy an annuity, I want to be reasonably sure that the insurance company will be able to live up to its obligation. If it guarantees me 3¼ per cent, as does the Prudential Insurance Company, it is evident that it will have to invest my money at a rate at least that high in order to break even. Today this is virtually impossible. For 1935 the average rate of interest earned by Prudential on all investments was only 3.46 per cent. The Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company did somewhat better, earning 3.99 per cent on all investments. But what really counts is the investment of the funds now being received, for the old investments are rapidly being called in. The Provident Mutual admits that its average return on new investments for 1935 was only 3.10 per cent; the other companies are doing little, if any, better.

As long as they are glutted with funds for which they cannot find suitable investment, the companies are not likely to be troubled by any immediate financial strain. But what of the future, particularly if annuitants as a group live longer than is anticipated under the life-expectancy tables? For years the life-insurance companies have been using a table of American mortality based on nineteenth-century death rates. The fact that the present generation appears to be living somewhat longer than the table indicated worked to the advantage of the companies as long as they concentrated on life insurance. But with annuities the reverse is true. According to American Men Table of Mortality, widely used as a basis for computing annuities, the average man of 42 years may expect to live 27.66 more years, while a man of 62 should live 13.06 years. But a computation of life expectancy on the basis of the 1920 census shows that the average man of 42 may look forward to 28.08 more years, and that the man of 62 may expect to live 13.85 years. Analysis of the 1930 census has not been completed, but it is said to show an even longer life expectancy for men under 60. This is making no allowance for the fact that annuitants, because of their financial security, are notoriously long-lived—though complete figures are lacking—nor for the fact that they are a highly selective group. A recent study by the United States Public Health Service reveals that the death rate for professional men in general is only 74 per cent of that of all gainfully employed individuals; proprietors, managers, officials, and white-collar workers also have a lower than average death rate, while that of semi-skilled and unskilled workers is far above the average. The types of men who can make substantial lump-sum payments for annuities are likely to be among the most vigorous and prosperous of the more favored categories and may very well live, on the average, several years longer than is anticipated. New mortality tables especially designed for annuities are coming into use, but many companies are still using the old tables.

All of this, of course, involves taking a long look ahead. For the moment the companies need have no fear of insolvency. Insurance companies are probably fully as strong as the banks. They have profited from their life insurance by the same factors which threaten their stability in the case of annuities. It may be that to pay their annuities they will simply draw upon the profits which they have obtained from selling life-insurance policies. This, however, is only possible if annuities do not become, as they richly deserve to do on principle, more popular than life insurance. It is true that the companies can raise their rates on new business sufficiently to compensate for any loss on the old. But what if something should happen to make people stop buying both annuities and life insurance? Assuming that the interest rate continues to drop, until, as Keynes predicts, it approaches zero, could the companies meet their obligations? Such development is not at all impossible. The failure of one big insurance company might lead to distrust of private insurance in general. Or, what is more likely, the government may recognize its

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obligation to its citizens by going into the annuity, and possibly the life-insurance, business for itself. The companies had to fight tooth and nail to prevent an annuity scheme from being incorporated in the Social Security Act, and it is just possible that a future Congress will not be as subordinate to private interests as the present one.

For the government is clearly the ideal agency to maintain a system of annuities. It could throw overboard the most vicious element in the present annuity scheme—the dependence on interest—and base a national system of retirement allowances and old-age assistance entirely on the contributions of the existing working population. Annuities could also be sold for cash, as now, or in instalments and the interest factor could be either eradicated or greatly reduced. This does not mean that government annuities need be more expensive than those sold by private enterprise. Elimination of the ubiquitous agents would make possible a substantial saving. It might also be argued that instead of paying interest, which is an indirect tax on production, the government would be justified in assuming at least a part of the administrative expense necessary for setting up a comprehensive scheme of old-age security available for the entire population. The old-age-insurance scheme established by the Social Security Act merely scratches the surface of the need. It is conceivable that a more adequate program will not be forthcoming. Meanwhile, I am keeping my money out of the grasp of the insurance companies.

Red China on the March

BY NORMAN D. HANWELL

THE sudden appearance of a portion of the Chinese Red Army, 70,000 strong, at the gates of Titao, fifty miles south of the capital of Kansu, indicates that Chiang Kai-shek's repeated campaigns for the "eradication of the Communist menace" have not been conspicuously successful. The Kansu army, under the combined leadership of Chu Teh and Hsu Hsiang-ch'ien, is only one of the three main Red armies which are now well established in the western part of China. A second army, under Mao Tse-tung, has its base in northern Shensi and has penetrated into western Shansi. A third, led by Ho Lung and Hsiao Ke, at one time reported to be completely surrounded in Hunan, has followed the trail of the main Red forces last year, and is now in western Szechuan and Hsikang.

Why are these Red Army advances not reported in the daily press? Simply because the semi-official Central News Service, aided by press censorship, misreports them as government victories and Red Army defeats. For example, government troops following the main Red Army through Kweichow, and occupying cities purposely evacuated by the Reds, reported a new victory at each reoccupied town. In Szechuan the occupation of towns evacuated by the northward-advancing Red Army was also reported as a victory over desperate Red "remnants"—a favorite government misnomer for any Red Army group. After repeated reports of the successes gained by Shansi troops in this region against Reds attempting to cross the Yellow River, news suddenly leaked out that the Reds had occupied more than ten *hsien* (counties) in the western part of the province and were continuing their advance to the central plain of Shansi. Since most government victories have proved to be of this character, is it any wonder that one begins to substitute the word "defeat" whenever a supervised dispatch reports a government "victory"?

Why have the Communist armies been able to wander at will in the western provinces of China—Kweichow, Szechuan, and Shensi? General economic unrest and the geography of the region have certainly aided them, but there have also been special conditions contributing to their ease of movement.

Szechuan, a province so rich and fertile that its natural resources should insure all its inhabitants an adequate livelihood, has been completely under the thumb of war lords who amuse themselves by playing at war as others play at bridge. Land taxes in this province have in some instances been collected beyond the year 1985; and not only has the amount of the tax increased, but the number of collections a year has risen from two to as many as fourteen. The land surtax, legally limited to an amount equal to the basic land tax itself, has in some cases been more than twenty times as great. Figures show that land taxes in this province are four times those of any other province of China, almost ten times as great as in Japan, and approximately 2,100 per cent higher than the average farm-land tax rate in the United States. These exorbitant demands by the military leaders have led many farmers to refuse longer to cultivate their land. Small wonder that the Communist troops have been welcomed with open arms wherever they have appeared.

In northern Shensi Communist propagandists have been at work for almost ten years, and aided by the poverty of the inhabitants and the rapacity of the government, have been so successful that they have actually been able to conduct open meetings at district fairs; magistrates are afraid to test their strength by arresting them. Northern Shensi has not been under the provincial government of Shensi for many years, control being exercised by opium-trading subordinates of the Shansi ruler, General Yen Hsi-shan. At present this region contains both organized Red armies and a new generation of communized youth, willing to fight for its ideals. Government troops marching into these regions have frequently been ambushed by the peasants, and whole divisions de-

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stroyed. Front-line government units have been cut off for long periods from their bases, unable to maintain contact with main headquarters except by air.

General Yen Hsi-shan, overlord of Shansi and northern Shensi, recognized the dangers of the present land situation and introduced what he called "village ownership of land." But this plan had to be abandoned because of the pressure of the Red armies. The trend in Shansi has been for owners to sink to the level of part owners, and for part owners to sink to the level either of tenants or of mere farm laborers. Such statistics as are available show that a disproportionate amount of land is held by small groups of landlords. In northern Shansi one *hsien* reports that 25 per cent of the total number of families owns 53 per cent of the land, or seventy-three *mu* (about thirteen acres) per family—considered a large holding in China! Further south concentration of the land in the hands of a few is even more marked; one *hsien* reports that 7 per cent of the population holds 44 per cent of the land and 86 per cent of the families only 39 per cent of the land.

Such, briefly, is the situation in those regions in which Red Army units have been active. What are the conditions existing in other provinces of China? The phrase most encountered in conversation and articles by both Chinese and foreign observers dealing with the economic conditions of rural China, the China of the masses, is *nung-ts'un p'o-ch'an*—"rural bankruptcy." Taxes, in spite of manifestoes claiming reductions, have not been decreased. In some sections the rates have not been increased but the decrease in farm income caused by low prices has made the burden actually heavier. Oppressive conditions of land tenure under which more than half the crop goes to an absentee landlord persist without even a verbal promise of improvement. More than 90 per cent of the rural loans in China are obtained from landlords, rich farmers, merchants, pawnshops, or money shops; less than 10 per cent from the much-publicized cooperative societies, with their lower interest rates.

This widespread state of bankruptcy has resulted in much unrest in provinces bordering on those in which Red armies are active. Both Honan and Hopei—neighbors of Shansi—have active groups of armed Communists—small, it is true, but constituting nuclei which can grow in suitable conditions. In addition, with educational facilities growing and the literacy rate of the peasants rising—by reason of adult mass education as well as a larger number of regular schools—more articulate discontent has developed among the peasants. This discontent of the masses makes them receptive to proposals for ameliorating their lot. The Communists offer radical reform of the prevailing system of taxation and land tenure, and the abolition of usury.

The present National Government of China is frankly unable to cope with the prevailing inequalities and distress. It is supported primarily by the exploiters of the peasantry—landlords and usurers. In addition, it has failed to offer resistance to Japanese aggression, a failure which an increasing number of Chinese consider treasonable. Growing recognition of Nanking's subservience to Japan has added to the prestige and the opportunities of the Communists.

Meanwhile, Japanese activity in the north has brought about a tardy revival of national feeling on the part of the student class. The central government has not only refused to accede to the students' demands but has adopted drastic repressive measures in an effort to stem the tide of patriotic fervor. But its attempt to prove that all students are Communists merely because they do not wish to turn their country over to a foreign invader has had unfavorable repercussions. Students whose interests and bias were naturally anti-Communist have turned in great numbers to the support of the Red Army simply because it appeared to be the sole defender of Chinese independence.

Geographic factors have also contributed greatly to the enhanced prestige of the Chinese Soviets. As long as the Soviet districts were confined to Kiangsi and remote sections of Szechuan, the anti-Japanese slogans of the Reds had very little meaning. But with their recent invasion of the province of Shansi, where only scattered Soviet districts previously existed, the Communists constitute not only a serious obstacle to Japan's immediate plans for a five-province "buffer state" but a formidable threat to the Japanese flank in the event of an attack on Outer Mongolia. The Communists' offer of a united front for a national war against Japan has become a practical proposal.

Drawing by Gropper

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How Dead Is Liberalism?

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

III

THE keystone of Communist thought is the paradox which states that true liberalism can be achieved only through the violation of liberal principles. Without this paradox there would be no possibility of reconciling the aims which the Communist professes with the means by which he proposes to reach them, and it is not unnatural perhaps that he should turn to equally paradoxical solutions for other difficulties.

Anna Louise Strong, for example, once argued in the *American Mercury* that even the temporary dictatorship in Russia was really less a dictatorship than a Higher Sort of Democracy, and supported the contention with the following ingenious argument. The success of the enterprises carried out under the dictatorship was proof that what the people had been made to do was what, in their deepest selves, they willed to do—even if it was not what their shallower selves would have voted for had they had the misfortune to live under a government so unwise as to consult these shallower selves instead of accepting the mandate conferred by its mystic insight into the depths of the popular will. Miss Strong would, I presume, refuse to consider the success of the Ethiopian venture as proof that Italian fascism is also a truer sort of democracy than that which is crudely represented by civil liberties and the ballot box, but it is hardly worth while to argue the point or to indicate that her reasoning is precisely that of the church, which has always maintained that the only true liberty is the liberty to obey one's spiritual superiors.

For reasons which were, I hope, sufficiently indicated in the last previous article of this series, the liberal is less inclined either to match with the Communist such theological ingenuities as these or to look for flaws in the logic which links his concepts than he is to appeal to psychology on the one hand or to history on the other. When M. Malraux, for example, elaborates his theory of a purely political dictatorship which leaves the artist and the intellectual free to think and to create as their genius commands, the difficulty lies not in anything which is wrong with this quasi-utopian conception as such but in the fact that there is nothing in past human experience to suggest that it could ever be realized. With the exception of modern fascism, most dictatorships have, as a matter of fact, accepted "in principle" M. Malraux's thesis. Even the censorship of the Catholic church professes to concern itself with nothing except that which affects faith and morals, just as—so I was assured by Mr. Fischer during the darkest period of RAPP—the censorship of the Russian government differed significantly from all previous censorships in maintaining that its aims were purely political. But was anything ever found which could not, in actual practice, be shown to affect faith and morals on the one hand or to have political implications of some sort on the other? If the Catholic church could forbid the teachings of Galileo on the ground that the question whether or not the earth moves is a moral question, if the Russian government can take up an official position on the place of love in the good life on the ground that the question is, at bottom, a political question, then M. Malraux's solution of the problem of intellectual liberty under a political dictatorship is the purest moonshine.

Obviously the difficulty is not in reaching an agreement to limit dictatorship to political matters; the difficulty is in maintaining any practical agreement upon a working definition of political significance. And if M. Malraux actually believes that the matter has been settled when an artist or an intellectual walks in on a meeting of the Central Executive Committee to announce that he offers political submission in exchange for a charter of intellectual liberty, then M. Malraux is, to put it mildly, better as what I believe the Communists call a "theoretician" than he is at understanding the practical workings of government.

For the present, at least, I am not considering the proper limits (if any) of free discussion. I am illustrating with a concrete instance that tendency of the liberal to differ from the Communist, not over the ends proposed, but over the extent to which theoretical programs can be assumed to solve the difficulties in the way of achieving them. The difference is, if you like, largely a temperamental one; but it remains, for all that, very far from superficial. Nothing sunders more completely M. Malraux, let us say, from a typical liberal like Bertrand Russell than the fact that to the one the temporary dictatorship inevitably gives way to the new and true democracy because it is arranged in his ideology that it should do so, while to the other both history and psychology seem to indicate that dictatorships give birth to dictatorships just as wars give birth to wars.

The orthodox Communist may point to the new Russian constitution as evidence that the inevitable is happening. The liberal replies that the constitution provides neither for any possible candidates except those selected by the government nor for any modification of the present anomalous situation under which a person whose official position is nominally minor may rule with dictatorial power. He adds that there was no indication in the recent state trial of any disposition to grant the defendants the advantage of that legal machinery which is supposed to guard the rights of the meanest criminals under the democratic system, and he is likely to agree with the conclusion which Mr. Russell expressed to me in con-

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versation: the new Russian constitution might possibly become significant if the present dictators should die without obvious successors. It is bound to remain merely a gesture so long as those rulers remain alive or leave behind them others sufficiently strong to establish a claim to succession.

It is the temperamental difference which is responsible also for the fact that so many of the attempts made by liberals and Communists to argue out their differences end in a pointless comparison of the compromises and failures of a working democracy with the neat perfections in the blueprints for a Communist paradise. The thoroughgoing Marxist is ready enough to point out how the society which the liberal philosophy imagined never actually came into being because the existence of money power stood in the way; but realist though he claims to be, he is quite unwilling to grant even the possibility that factors—like the power of bureaucracy—unrecognized in his blueprints tend to make Communist practice as significantly different from Communist theory as the actual liberal society is different from liberal theory. And it is, I think, rather through innocence than guile that he is always proposing for debate some such questions as "Can war be prevented under capitalism?" instead of another which the liberal, if he is sufficiently sly, would much prefer—namely, "Can war be prevented?"

According to early liberal theorists war was, of course, to be abolished by democracy. "The people," it was said, had nothing to gain from fighting one another, and "the people" therefore would be always for peace. No doubt the Communist can explain with clarity and truth why it did not turn out so, but he is little inclined to submit his own plans to a criticism conducted in an equally realistic spirit. On paper the Communist state would abolish that economic rivalry which is assumed to be the only cause of military conflict, and if a single Communist state were actually world-wide then obviously no war except civil war would be possible. But so would it be under any rule which was actually effective over the entire globe, whether it happened to be Communist or not.

In theory, no doubt, Communists ought to be able to get together and to form such an international state, but so, for that matter, ought democrats, and up to the present at least there is no evidence that to be a Communist implies any agreement with other Communists closer than the agreement at present existing between democrats. Does anyone seriously suppose that a Union of Soviet Republics under Stalin would necessarily live at peace with, let us say, a Union of Franco-German Socialist Republics under Trotsky? The basis of economic rivalry between them would be precisely the same as that of the rivalry between any other two states, and it is difficult to see how anyone who is familiar with the language used recently in Russia about the "Trotsky gang" can doubt that two Communist states could easily hate each other with a righteous hate indistinguishable from that which has proved so useful in the wars between "the peoples" of other nations.

M. Malraux, to whom I posed these questions, promised a reply by mail, which never came. Mr. Russell expressed opinions identical with my own, and under the circumstances it is perhaps not suprising that he reached the almost cynical conclusion that the *sine qua non* of peace is not any particular kind of international government but merely an international government of some kind. Half-seriously he said: The end of the next world war will find most of what is left upon the globe under the rule of American capitalists who will have financed the conflict in exchange for economic controls very much like those which they have demanded and received from the republics of South and Central America. It will not be a very good government—but it will do.

Not very long ago *The Nation* published two articles by its Moscow correspondent, Louis Fischer, on the new abortion laws in the Soviet Union. In one of them was a letter, obviously intended to reveal a more or less typical condition, from a woman who protested that she could not afford to have more babies because she was then living with three other persons in a single room.

I need hardly add that the letter was not intended to draw attention to housing conditions in Moscow, but it does so nevertheless and in a manner all the more striking because the conditions described are taken for granted. I know of course that it will be immediately replied that Russia has not had time to catch up; but the meaning of the situation has not been fully explored until it is added that many persons in the Soviet Republic are far better housed than this woman and that four people who live in one room have not been given their equitable share of what is actually available. It must be admitted, in other words, that neither plenty on the one hand nor equitable distribution on the other has been achieved, and it is hard to see how a society which, after twenty years, has established neither a decent minimum standard nor an equitable sharing of the little that is available can be said to have advanced very far toward a classless society.

No wonder that many of those who call themselves Communists tend—it seems to me in increasing numbers—to insist that one should evaluate communism not by the study of the only actually functioning Communist society but by the blueprints for a different one. It is possible of course that they are right. It may be that the failure of communism in Russia to approximate the truly liberal society in the midst of plenty which the Communist specifications call for is the result of mismanagement plus the peculiar conditions under which the experiment has taken place. But as long as Russia remains also the *only* experiment so far conducted, there is at least some justification for the suspicion that the failure is no greater than is to be expected when any plan is put into operation—no greater, for example, than the failure of actual working democracies to achieve all that the theory of democracy provides for. The liberal and the Communist do not disagree concerning the beauty of what the Communist is sure he sees just beyond the civil war and the temporary dictatorship of the proletariat. But to the one it is a Pisgah sight. To the other it may be only a mirage.

[*Mr. Krutch's final article will appear next week.*]

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The Sunrise Conference

BY ALEX MATHEWS ARNETT

THE story has long been current that in April, 1916, when the submarine controversy reached its gravest crisis prior to the eve of hostilities, President Wilson held an early morning conference at the White House with a group of Congressional leaders at which he vehemently urged upon them that the time had come for a breach with Germany. They are said to have countered with equal heat that if he attempted such a move they would fight it on the floors of Congress, and as large majorities in both houses were firmly opposed to war, they would block any war resolution. The meeting was allegedly held at an early hour to avoid publicity, and thus it is referred to as the "Sunrise Conference."

In the absence of sufficient authentication, historians—with one or two exceptions—have not heretofore accepted this story. Some months ago, however, while examining the papers of Claude Kitchin—now available in the library of the University of North Carolina—the writer came upon correspondence in which Kitchin definitely confirmed the basic points. More recently, further confirmation has been obtained.

It seems that the first published account of the conference appeared in an article by Gilson Gardner in *McNaught's Monthly* in June, 1925, under the title Why We Delayed Entering the War. It was based largely upon hearsay evidence with some apparent confirmation from Claude Kitchin and Mrs. Champ Clark. Mr. Gardner had written to them, relating the story as he had heard it and inquiring about its truth. Both replies were apparently confirmatory, but upon scrutiny neither appeared conclusive. They left no doubt that some such conference was held, but Kitchin made no reference to what the issue was or what was said. Mrs. Clark only raised doubts as to whether she had in mind a conference in April concerned with the Sussex crisis or one of the secret meetings known to have been held in the preceding February.

If the Sunrise Conference was held in February, it would appear to have been much less significant than if it actually accorded with the traditional account. On the former occasion President Wilson apparently was not pressing for immediate hostilities, whereas in April he seriously considered such a move. It is known that he had Lansing prepare a note to Germany severing diplomatic relations, but he put it aside and wrote another which left the door open for our continued "neutrality." Why did he change his mind?

On March 24, 1921, C. H. Claudy of Washington wrote Kitchin:

> I have been told that in 1916 President Wilson called a conference between the Honorable Champ Clark, the Honorable Mr. Flood, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and yourself, that this conference took place early in the morning in order to avoid the presence of newspapermen, and that at this conference President Wilson expressed his desire to declare war against Germany but was persuaded not to do so by you three gentlemen, who told him that if he attempted such a thing, you would fight him on the floor of the House.
>
> If this is a true story (and my informant said that his information came from you) it is, of course, something that the country would be very much interested in hearing. If it is not a true story it ought not to be spread.
>
> I, therefore, am writing you and asking you if in the first place it is true; and, in the second place, if it is a fact, would you be willing to give me an authorized interview to that effect or sign a statement to that effect, looking to publication?

To this Kitchin replied on April 2:

> I have just been handed your letter at my residence by my clerk. I would rather see you in my office and talk with you about the matter as soon as I am well enough to go down to the Capitol regularly than to write you about it at this time.
>
> Champ Clark, Flood, and myself did have early one morning, between seven and eight o'clock, such a conference with the President. At that time he seemed anxious to go to war with Germany immediately. This was in April, 1916. Champ Clark, Flood, and myself have talked about the matter dozens of times and our recollection as to just what was said exactly coincides.
>
> As said above, some time after I get well enough to be at the Capitol regularly, you can come up and I will have Flood come in my office and we will talk with you about it, and you can have our recollections of the matter, but this is not written for publication at this time. When I recover my health and strength, I will give you the whole story, perhaps for publication.

Kitchin had suffered a stroke in April, 1920, from which he never entirely recovered; but his mind and his remarkable memory remained as clear as ever. So far as is known he never elaborated further upon the conference except in private conversation. He often discussed it in confidence with members of his family, his colleagues, and other friends. His son, Mills, who was an adult at the time, remembers having heard him talk of it then and often thereafter. He is quite positive that the conference occurred in April. Judge E. Yates Webb, who was then a colleague of Kitchin's, writes:

> I do remember (and I think it was about this same conference) Hal Flood's coming to me on the floor of the House, rather much agitated, and saying that it looked like we were going to get in the war, judging from the President's attitude. I remember Flood's saying that he and others in the conference asked the President what we, the United States, would do in case we did get into war, and he said that the President replied, "Well, we will lend the Allies some money, send a few ships over there, and wind up the war."

Allan L. Benson also confirms the story. He was with Kitchin, he says, within a few hours after the conference; he found him "deeply stirred" and "indignant" as he told of the dramatic encounter. "He said that Wilson pounded the table with his fist and said that if this country were to declare war at once hostilities would be ended by August."

Shortly afterward the country was ringing with the campaign slogan, "He kept us out of war."

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

THE Harvard Tercentenary was worthy of the finest traditions of that great university. What higher praise could there be than that? I do not mean merely the traditions of scholarship, or those of Brahmin Boston, which have often controlled it to its hurt, but the traditions of academic freedom, of the right of the scientist, the scholar, and the teacher to think their own thoughts, hold their own beliefs, and express their own opinions. That was the keynote of the proceedings put forward by President Conant with the support of President Angell of Yale and the President of the United States. Of course Harvard has sometimes honored this in the breach. Was not Professor Charles Follen driven from his chair because of his anti-slavery views? Did not the university share Charles William Eliot's hostile opinion of its graduate who was probably the foremost American orator and the most eloquent champion of liberty, Wendell Phillips? Is there not even the case of the conservative professor who was ejected because he criticized the public ovations to the revolutionary Louis Kossuth? But these and other inconsistencies and failings of the past only emphasize the more the admirable statements of what Harvard should and must stand for in our national life if it is to serve the Republic. Also the occasion stressed again the university's extraordinary good fortune in having as its new president a man aflame for the cause of academic freedom, who dared before that conservative audience to declare that the university must dissect "the forces of modern capitalism" just as it would establish "the origin of the rocks." The cheers with which his utterances were greeted were most hopeful signs that the tide of reaction is beginning to turn in this country.

I found the whole gathering, the entire procedure, profoundly impressive, but nothing impressed me more than the absence of uniforms, the total lack of marching hosts and helmeted heads. The few military officers present were in attendance upon the President and the Governor of Massachusetts. The ununiformed undergraduates who marched to their seats raised up no arms in salute and clenched no fists. They did not keep step; they bore no banners of prejudice, hate, intolerance, and war. Theirs are unregimented minds, and the three who spoke for their undergraduate fellows seemed determined to emphasize their freedom by the most outspoken criticism of their elders, of the university, of authority. Of course the ceremony was not as spectacular as the recent display at Heidelberg. There was no goose-stepping, no martial music, none of the thrills that come when thousands and thousands march in unbroken ranks. But one sat there and thanked God that one was an American, and that whatever the future holds, today there are men, the whole learned group, free to stand up for the most worth-while things in human life—the unfettered mind, the unimprisoned soul. Heidelberg? Well, its 550th anniversary last month did not bring out the most important fact about that university today, that in the last four years forty-seven of its professors and teachers have been driven from their chairs, more than 24 per cent of the entire faculty. That is all one needs to know to decide not to send one's son there—a place where men may teach but dare not say their souls are their own. Quite properly in all that great assembly of scholars there was only one official delegate from a German institution; and honorary degrees were conferred on a number of Jews.

There were other things to make one proud. The President of the United States rose to the occasion, not only as the foremost Harvard man but as the leader of the country. His speech measured up to all that was uttered on those two days. It was graceful, able, of literary flavor, and perfectly attuned to the moment and the occasion, without, of course, the slightest trace of partisanship, save one humorous reference to the fact that when Harvard was 200 years old the direful Andrew Jackson was President, and when it was 250 years old the Democrat, Grover Cleveland, "and now *I* am President." The applause and acclaim with which Franklin Roosevelt was received on that occasion will never be forgotten by those who heard them. Probably the majority of those in Sanders Theater who rose for the President when he entered will vote against him in November. That exhibition of tolerance, sportsmanship, and good-will to a political opponent should be written down in letters of gold in the annals of Harvard. For many of those who welcomed the fourth Harvard man to be Chief Executive of the nation are really deluded into believing that he plans to overthrow our system of government and deliberately to play traitor to the Republic.

Two days of ceremony and oratory and not a single false note! Two days without an official reference to the government—the President spoke before the Alumni Association and not at the official university celebration. Two days of stressing the things of the spirit, the glory of the intellectual life, the nobility and the continuing challenge of the search for truth within academic walls, and not merely Harvard walls, but the walls of every university in America. For this was the final prayer of President Conant—that a hundred years hence it be manifest that all the universities of this country "have led the way to new light, and may the nation give thanks that Harvard was founded."

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BROUN'S PAGE

I HATE to hear phrases cry out in agony. The practice of being cruel to words has gone on for centuries, but it seems to me that certain refinements in torture are peculiarly characteristic of the modern world. As far as I know, the Greeks and the Romans never took popular slogans and placed them on some rack by which they could be stretched wholly out of their natural shape and length. Perhaps they did. If so, the Greeks and the Romans were very much at fault. The present political campaign has proved that "freedom" and "liberty" may be transformed into brass knuckles with which to club the unfortunate. One of the favorite devices of the day is to address rhetorical questions to jobless ones asking them whether they are not sufficiently patriotic to insist upon self-reliance and starvation.

But of course the honey of the lot is "freedom of the press" as it is employed by publishers. Consider, please, the current situation in Seattle, where the *Post-Intelligencer* has suspended publication because of a strike by the American Newspaper Guild. Mr. Hearst and all his cohorts in the A. N. P. A. insist that this successful labor battle against a newspaper constitutes a violation of the constitutional guaranty of freedom of the press. As I read the amendment in the Bill of Rights, it does no more than specify that there shall be no form of censorship before the printing of the word. It does not say that a publisher may not be sued and punished for libel, obscenity, incitement to riot, or many other crimes and misdemeanors. I will admit that I would like to see it go much farther. But as it stands the pledge does not go beyond the promise that the man who has the power to print may do so without asking anybody's permission as to the quality of his reports or opinions.

However, I find nothing in the constitutional guaranty which says that the government must aid and abet each and every citizen in his desire to print. To be specific, I hold certain opinions just as stalwartly as any in the Hearst quiver are held. It so happens that I am not in a position to get out my own newspaper. I believe that condition is unfortunate, and yet I hardly feel that I am empowered to complain that natural rights have been taken from me. Much of what I want to say goes into the *World-Telegram* and into *The Nation*. But I do not control the policy of either publication. Certain ardent sentiments I swallow, or hold for the time being within my mouth as a cow retains her cud. Like the cow I am for the most part contented. It may even be that mastication will mellow and improve some of my political opinions. In all these matters I assert that I am far more reasonable than William Randolph Hearst. If a strike disturbs the publication of his Seattle *P.-I.* that is, from his point of view, unfortunate. But it is not a violation of any guaranty of free press. Mr. Hearst can print that paper as well as all his others the moment he is ready to discuss working conditions with his organized employees. Surely none will contend that reporters, printers, pressmen, stereotypers, and photo-engravers must proceed upon their endeavors regardless of pay and hours for the sake of the freedom of the press. Around the theater it is said, "The show must go on," but that obligation exists only when those who make the backbone of the show have entered into fair contracts with the entrepreneur.

Of late I fear that publishers have grown both greedy and heretical. Within the last few years there has grown up a feeling that provisions which obtain in other establishments must not be urged upon newspapers without a loud squeal on their part concerning tyranny. It is difficult to reduce the argument to its logical absurdity because none can be stated which certain newspaper owners have not seriously defended. For instance, I might set forth a hypothetical case about as follows: Suppose an American newspaper were printed in a building so flagrantly out of line with the building restrictions that it constituted a fire trap. Could anybody conceivably say that the municipal authorities might not call upon the publisher either to provide fire escapes or shut up shop until such time as the premises were made safe for the workers? And yet a case of this kind arose in Boston, and the newspaper concerned refused to put up fire escapes or so much as provide a rope for any beleaguered printer or reporter to slide to the street. The newspaper contended that the city of Boston in calling upon it to spend additional money was interfering with the freedom of the press.

Advocates of the child-labor amendment are familiar with the fact that their strongest adversary is the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. This organization maintains both state and federal lobbies to block any legislation which would make it impossible to use youngsters as carriers or newsboys. Children, of course, can be hired more cheaply than adults, and the organized newspapers of America contend that any change in this condition would constitute an interference with the freedom of the press.

I was arguing with the editor of a morning paper about the fake story which Mr. Hearst's *Mirror* ran concerning the murderer of Mrs. Titterton. J. David Stern exposed this shocking piece of invention in his New York *Post*. I asked my friend the editor why he had not done the same thing. "I just didn't think of it," he answered. "Well," I continued, "don't you think it would be a good thing if the Newspaper Guild were strong enough to pass and enforce a rule that none of its members should ever be compelled to write flagrant and manifest lies?"

"Oh, I couldn't go for that," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Why, that would constitute an interference with the freedom of the press," he told me.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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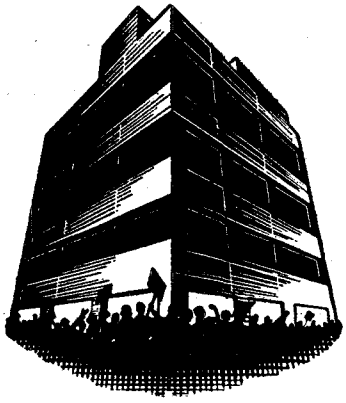

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Here Comes the Mower

By IRVING FINEMAN

Here comes the mower with whirring wheels
and clickricking ratchet, hauled by two horses,
beasts driven by man perched on high,
his head high against the blue heavens:
Ineluctable will driving force,
force driving the patterned process
to inevitable consequence. Tall tender grasses
fall from the grace of this green life,
fall to the endlessly fruitful and greedy earth,
fall to feed forces that enrich,
destroy for enrichment . . . O proud tender grasses,
do not despair! Do not bow to the oncoming reaper.
Stand and draw with delight the last sweet drop of dew
as sharp death cleaves your side.
Nor fear nor vilify the knife
that cuts you down to the pleasant
earth that brought you forth
and, relentless, will hold you to the knife.
Nor curse ratchet and wheels
nor the driven beasts nor the will
poised upon clouds; for this
is all our destiny—even proud man's.

Stranger Than Fiction

CRADLE OF LIFE. By Louis Adamic. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

I NEED not remind the readers of "Laughing in the Jungle" and "The Native's Return" that Louis Adamic is a writer of unquestionable ability. In "Dynamite," as well as in articles for *The Nation,* he has shown himself to be one of the most energetic, most persuasive publicists in contemporary journalism. Because his writing is infused with great personal charm, I find it difficult to resist anything he has written. And with that charm he has employed a social conscience to excellent advantage. His treatment of peasant character in "The Native's Return" should serve as a model for young proletarian novelists, for Louis Adamic is one of the few writers of our time who have invested the peasant with human dignity and admirable strength. Mr. Adamic's autobiographies are read with the ease that we associate with the reading of fiction; his fiction, on the other hand, is read with the slow embarrassment that accompanies the reading of the falsified yet "true" confession story.

His "Cradle of Life" is a second novel, told in the first person of Rudo Stanka, an illegitimate descendant of the Hapsburg line, son of a Moravian countess and Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria. Under the shadow of mystery attending illegitimate birth we are led to expect a romance as fantastic as the story of "A Prisoner of Zenda," the romance that our mothers read, reread, and lent and borrowed. The expectation is not entirely denied. Illegitimate birth is followed by exploits in which men faint and out of which good, old-fashioned Balkan heroes and heroines are made. The plot and circumstance are of a pattern I had thought was broken long before the Theater Guild revived "Arms and the Man." There is scarcely a device of pre-Shavian operatics that remains unused: young Rudo's long memory (which defies even the most rudimentary laws of human psychology), his genius for attracting birds and animals, his disaster in a fire are here set down in the approved manner of our earliest imported romances of Central Europe—and there is no lack of action on any of these pages.

And yet, under all this melodrama that so closely approximates opera bouffe, there is a layer of careful observation, a genuine use of economic history, an understanding of peasants and their way of living, a perception of natural phenomena and their beauty. Rudo's wet-nurse, Dora, is the character that one remembers; it was her business to take charge of illegitimate children and then destroy them. Mr. Adamic derives the title of his book from the cradle rocking at her side, a cradle of life for some, of death for many—and when one thinks of the Yugoslavia that Mr. Adamic has created for us in "The Native's Return," the symbolic reference of Dora's cradle has emotional reality. But this reference has only the most tenuous relation to the artificial machinery by which Mr. Adamic propels his present story. The episodes in themselves might well have had their basis, I suspect, in the familiar record of phenomenal truth that is always stranger than fiction, the kind of sensational fact we encounter in the "Believe-It-or-Not" syndicated feature of the daily newspaper. Such fact, unrelated to symbolic reference or to psychological motivation, remains stranger than fiction and immeasurably less convincing.

HORACE GREGORY

A Study of Brahms

BRAHMS: HIS LIFE AND WORK. By Karl Geiringer. Translated by H. B. Weiner and Bernard Miall. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.

THIS is the first good book on Brahms that I have encountered. As custodian of the collections of the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna, Geiringer has had access to hitherto inaccessible letters in the possession of the society; and he has supplemented these with other unpublished or unfamiliar Brahms correspondence. What is more important, however, is his use of this material: the author admires his subject but does not flinch at a wart on his nose; and writing with understanding as well as honesty, he has produced a credible portrait of a credible human being.

For his discussion of the music Geiringer has compared sketches in the possession of the society with the final manuscripts, and these with printed copies bearing Brahms's notations of changes for possible future editions, also in the possession of the society. These enable him to make interesting observations that stay, however, within the limits of complete acceptance of the music, instead of breaking through them. A critical revaluation of Brahms's music is still to be written.

Geiringer does lay the basis for such a revaluation in a con-

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cluding chapter on Brahms as man and artist. "A discord, a conflict of opposing forces, pervaded his whole existence, coloring his life and his work alike." In the man the conflict was between the "urge to freedom" and a "desire for subjection" to order; in the work this became a conflict between "fantasy" and "obedience to law"—between "his extravagance of feeling and his romantic enthusiasm" and "the striving for clearly articulated structure and established form"—or, Geiringer does not add, between over-sweet sentimentality and preoccupation with technical device, and sometimes not a conflict between them but a combination that is hard to endure.

Geiringer also makes the all-important observation concerning Brahms's variations that "the master's imagination rose to the greatest heights when under the constraint of the strictest laws." Brahms was essentially a lyricist, and as such a composer of small forms, and he was a marvelously skilful musical craftsman. Where he used his craftsmanship to inflate something small into something big—as in certain first movements—it is, like the music, an affliction. But in the variation form he was called on to exercise his craftsmanship on the task of saying one thing in a series of different ways, and to produce a large form by the process of writing a cumulative series of small ones. And his finest achievements are the sets of variations on themes of Händel, Haydn, Schumann, and Paganini, and the final passacaglia of the Fourth Symphony.

B. H. HAGGIN

From Surrealism to Socialism

THE BELLS OF BASEL. By Louis Aragon. Translated from the French by Haakon M. Chevalier. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

WHEN Louis Aragon, one of the founding fathers of dada and surrealism, turned to the proletariat for regeneration, he did so with that splendid violence characteristic of the cults he once championed. At that time the literature of the left was not so much being created as erupted, and Aragon's percussion effects and suave brutality went well with its dominant style. His poem, "The Red Front," brought down the wrath of the authorities upon his head, as their police minds would not put down to poetic license his open advocacy of the shooting of prominent politicians.

In time, however, Aragon's initial intoxication gradually gave way to the more sober tendencies in the literature to which he was now organically bound. And it is a tribute to the integrating powers of the doctrine he embraced that his first novel written under its influence should surprise us by its gravity of intention and maturity of performance. This poet of cosmopolitan rhetoric has turned into an eager student of history; and in his aspiration to the role of social analyst, he must needs rehearse the parts he once neglected. Like other contemporary novelists, Aragon returns to the pre-war scene in order to find and correlate the elements that shaped our present destiny. And the world he discovers in his expedition to the past is a world that cannot survive.

But in treating this material he adopts a particular angle of vision. His novel is built around the lives of three women, who become the focus of his insights into the society that produced them. Thus the story gains from the specific nature of its major theme, the theme of woman as a social animal. Diane, the first of the three, is an old-time courtesan, a worldly Maupassant heroine salvaged from her purely sexual existence in the traditional novel of passion and invested with the significance of a type representing the past of her sex. The second, Catherine, who claims most of our attention, takes all the lovers she has a fancy to, but is primarily afraid of love, for to her it is "the great swindle, the assertion of man's power over woman." To Catherine the revolution means the liberation of women from their debasement as creatures who either "sit with their embroidery behind window curtains" or pace the street corners waiting for men. Essentially she is the transitional type, attracted to revolutionary ideas, but unable to go beyond a mere tour of the classes in search of purpose and repose. Through her contacts with the anarchists we enter the submerged world of blind rebellion, which is contraposed to the world of Victor, the Socialist worker, who incarnates the discipline of consistent struggle. In the Epilogue, dealing with the International Socialist Congress in Basel, we are given an ecstatic portrait of Clara Zetkin. It is she who foreshadows the woman of tomorrow. Here the novelist sinks back into his poetic self, and the narrative dissolves into marine metaphors suggested by Clara's "measureless, magnificent eyes . . . blue and mobile, like deep waters crossed by currents."

But the mists of the happy future into which the novel vanishes cannot altogether conceal its defects. As with some other French writers, the charm and fluency of Aragon's prose is at times more expressive of the current level of French literary achievement, smoothly functioning in all of its works, than it is of the individual accents of an original creation. Catherine is somewhat too exotic to suit the part the author has assigned her within his social scheme; and Victor, intrinsically the same type as Edmond Maillecottin in Jules Romains, is nowhere realized as freshly and vividly as Edmond is in that remarkable seventeenth chapter of "The Earth Trembles." In fact, the whole section bearing Victor's name, which describes the great taxi strike in which he is involved, seldom rises above the plane of reporting. Aragon's problem, already solved in some measure by other revolutionary artists, is to wrestle with and overcome the tendency of his sociological facts to become the limbo of his imagination.

PHILIP RAHV

Markers for the Dead

POEMS OF PEOPLE. By Edgar Lee Masters. D. Appleton-Century Company. $2.50.

MASTERS first occupied himself with the writing of "poems of people" in 1923, selecting his subjects at random from history, imagination, and personal experience, with the idea of projecting—in the barbarous idiom of the dust papers—a "summation of life, of tragedy and comedy, of heroism and failure, of courage in battle and the walks of peace, of happiness and suffering, resignation and rebellion." To this end—a more pretentious one, surely, than the poet himself would be likely to confess to—the graveyards of Spoon River and the American dream tradition once more yield up their dead. From Spoon River in effect if not in fact are recruited the wraiths of Luke Crockett, "By the town worsted and his fight with solitaire and booze," of Tom Barron, destroyed equally by his will to life and "the cost of being good," of Dick Woodward, who renounced respectability for "the life of the loafers, quitters, and the dodgers." On the other hand a large portion of the book is devoted to patriotic eulogy of Washington, Jackson, Beauregard, Boone, Pickett, Lewis, and Van Buren, among others, all of whom are exhibited more as public monuments than as "people" and celebrated with aphorisms and limping meters. When every allowance has been made for the enormities notorious among ballad-makers, lines like the following must be set down as something less than heroic:

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Total rating on all of nineteen points	694	854

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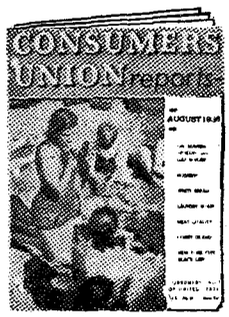
CONSUMERS UNION OF UNITED STATES, headed by Professor Colston E. Warne, of Amherst, Arthur Kallet, co-author of *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs*, and D. H. Palmer, now supplies 12,000 members (the number increasing at the rate of about 2,000 a month) with ratings of competing brands of products. If you, too, want this accurate and *unbiased* technical information—enabling you to save money and to buy intelligently—simply fill out and mail the coupon below. You will immediately receive the current issue. Membership will also entitle you to receive the yearly buying guide to be published late in the year. (Note: The limited $1 edition reports mainly on low-priced products and does not cover higher-priced commodities such as automobiles, refrigerators, etc. The full $3 service covers both types of products.)



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For the most part in the open to see with what he was copin',
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In the concluding portion of the volume, where a more personal note is struck, the tone is one of mordant nostalgia for the past, of contempt for the sterility and possessiveness of modern life, of proud personal estrangement, and of a general insistence on the stoic virtues of soldierly self-reliance and the "heroic will." The significant fact to be noted about the book as a whole, aside from its unrelieved triviality, is that, though it appears to have been assembled over a period of thirteen years, the tense throughout is that of time past. Mr. Masters's story from the very beginning has been that of the stone-cutter who has devoted a lifetime to the carving of markers for the dead, and comes, in the end, to see life backward; which is another thing from seeing it whole.

BEN BELITT

A Parochial Orbit

NOW THAT APRIL'S HERE, AND OTHER STORIES. By Morley Callaghan. Random House. $2.

I HAVE never cared much for Mr. Callaghan's novels, each of which, in spite of an interesting theme, seemed flat and pedestrian, more like a careful exercise than a freely moving narrative. But his short stories, if they have hardly more verve, are natural products of an artistic emotion; their sobriety, instead of mirroring the author's studious conscientiousness, emerges as a way of looking at life. Nor are they sober only: if they lack the transforming power of passion and wit, they have warmth and kindliness. In his novels Mr. Callaghan is often merely sympathetic with character, merely reportorial with events, merely plausible with causation, and the effect is too meager. But by choosing, in his stories, to treat of average people in simple situations, he does not use up all his ability on the stories themselves, and can employ what is left to deepen his moods. His people, studied with a single-mindedness that is almost an equivalent for the intensity he lacks, become after a while the symbols of common humanity with its pathetic helplessness and touches of tragic dignity. His people, furthermore, are in line with his own capacities: there are no heroes, no villains, no geniuses, no powerful personalities among them, as in Mr. Callaghan's writing there is no talent for being heroic, for being demonic, for being inspired, or for being richly personal.

This is a book filled with domestic situations, a book about mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, young husbands and wives, young lovers, brothers, friends, priests, old women. Almost all these people are destined for the same sort of existence, with the same problems, misunderstandings, difficulties, rewards; they live, almost all of them, inside a purely parochial orbit. It would not be difficult to sentimentalize them, particularly since Mr. Callaghan has none of the tough-mindedness of, say, a James Farrell; and perhaps by treating them over and over again, with no departures into worlds beyond their experience, Mr. Callaghan does finally leave a faintly sentimental impression. Still, the fault may be ours, may be due to our own over-cultivation, our own possession of too much sensibility and too little sentiment. For Mr. Callaghan handles his people honestly enough; his treatment has nothing in common with the homely pathos contrived by writers for women's magazines.

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His stories vibrate, however slightly, with the lasting, immemorial emotions of circumscribed family life, and end by inclosing for our view a particular kind of existence.

But just that may constitute a danger. Mr. Callaghan's people seem too neatly labeled: they are what a less social-minded age used to refer to as "the little people." They are caught fluttering in a cage—not an economic cage but an environmental one which I think comes in for over-emphasis, as though they were incapable of separate identity. When so many short stories, written over a period of time, are collected in one book and leave so unified an impression, our first thought is that we must have been given the truth; but when we find so unified an impression based upon so rigid an interpretation, we may begin to wonder whether some of the limitations the author ascribes to his characters do not belong to the author himself. Perhaps his characters grope less and vary more than Mr. Callaghan has suggested; perhaps by narrowing their world he puts us in a position, not to understand them better, but to misunderstand them worse—to find them all alike, to think of them as performing a routine cycle, to depersonalize and isolate them. The result, in terms of reading matter, is a slight monotony; in terms of interpretation, a kind of completeness without fulness. Because Mr. Callaghan is lacking in temperament does not necessarily prove that his characters are.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

The Popular Front in France

FRANCE TODAY, AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT. By Maurice Thorez. International Publishers. $1.75.

FRANCE FACES THE FUTURE. By Ralph Fox. International Publishers. $1.25.

MAURICE THOREZ is secretary-general of the French Communist Party, and Ralph Fox is a British Communist journalist. These two authors undertake to interpret the present situation in France by glorifying the policy of the Communist International. They achieve this by clearly presenting a revolutionary situation and as clearly failing to draw revolutionary conclusions.

The policy of the Comintern toward the French situation is guided entirely—as it is the world over—by the needs of Soviet diplomacy. Right now this diplomacy, at least in the opinion of the Soviet dictatorship, needs an alliance with liberal bourgeois forces, to the end that no proletarian revolution whose success is not contractually guaranteed may weaken the Franco-Soviet military pact. Therefore Soviet diplomacy requires the French Communists to abandon the revolutionary struggle and to unite in a popular front even with the leaders of the Radical Socialist wing of French finance capital.

It is already clear that the Popular Front government has miserably failed. The fascist leagues—whose dissolution M. E. Ravage, in *The Nation* of August 8, showed to be purely legalistic—are steadily arming. Even *l'Humanité,* official organ of the French Communist Party, interlards the triumphant oratory of M. Thorez and other Communist leaders with articles showing that the French army is being prepared for a fascist coup d'état by the reactionary. Every reactionary force in France at this moment is taking its place in a calm and deliberate preparation for a fascist coup, which M. Blum prepares to meet exactly as Severing and Braun prepared to meet the Hitler coup, as Azaña prepared to meet the Spanish fascist rebellion—with the traditional paralysis

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of a Social Democratic government in the face of a social crisis.

To make the Popular Front seem the hope of France, Messrs. Thorez and Fox have to do two things: they have to rewrite the past and they have to misrepresent the present. About the past of the Comintern they are very glib. The party line has zigzagged in the past decade to suit the exigencies of Soviet diplomacy. These zigzags are deftly smoothed out with the fantasy that the strategy of the International since 1920 has been one continuous effort to achieve the united front. In 1924 the united front was proposed to the Socialists in a letter which called upon all workers "either to join the Communist Party in order to carry on a united working-class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie whether right or left, or to join the Radical Party against the Communist Party, which absolutely refuses to practice inter-class collaboration." The Socialists answered that they considered the letter an insult. In 1928 the offer was repeated, accompanied by an assurance to Communists that the party knew the Socialists would not accept, but that it was necessary to appeal to the Socialist rank and file over the heads of their leaders—in other words, the famous "united front from below." Later, in the hysterical days of the "third period," the Comintern discovered that all Socialists were fascists. And a united front with Social Democrats, let alone capitalist parties, was declared to be a counter-revolutionary crime. Then suddenly these fiery revolutionaries turned into reformists, not only united with quondam "social fascists" but practicing "inter-class collaboration" with capitalist parties. The reason, of course, is Hitler.

So much for the consistency of Communist strategy as dictated by the Comintern. The *policy* did not change. Ever since Stalin came to power it has been dominated by the obsession of "socialism in one country," and hence, of course, revolution nowhere else. Popular Front reformism today, like the infantile leftism of the "social fascist" period, is paralyzing the Western working classes in the face of the rising tide of fascism. "Social fascism" raised up a fanatically anti-Soviet fascism in Germany. Popular Front reformism seems well on the way to raise up an allied fascism in France. Soviet diplomacy, for all its reputed cleverness, seems once more to be defeating its own end.

It is unfortunate for these authors that their books appear in the midst of the fascist rebellion in Spain against the Spanish Popular Front government. For they give no intimation that fascism is to be defeated only by the arming of the working class against a fascist coup, by revolutionary changes in the military personnel, by reorganization of the police, by a desperate fight against finance capital. On the contrary they depend upon a Popular Front government pledged to carry out a reformist program which, according to M. Thorez, "can be realized within the framework of the capitalist regime." The revolutionary aims of the Communist Party can wait. But revolutionary situations do not wait upon reformist programs.

Faced with fascist preparations, the best M. Thorez can offer the French working class is bombast, bourgeois pacifism, and the slogan "Defense of the Soviet Union in all cases and by all means." But leaders who mean business do not lead against gas bombs and machine-guns masses of untrained followers armed only with a will to peace and the clenched fists of the Communist salute. Therefore one must assume that M. Thorez does not mean business. But the fascists do. Theoretically, of course, the Popular Front government controls the army; but we have the Spanish rebellion to show what that means. And a popular militia improvised at the last

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minute will stand no chance against the most efficient fighting force in Europe if that force can be led by fascist generals to throw in its lot with the reaction. One cannot read these two books without being reminded of Marx's caustic comments on the French democrats in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte":

> Weakness had, as it ever does, taken refuge in the wonderful; it believed that the enemy was overcome if, in its imagination, it hocus-pocused him away; and it lost all sense of the present in the imaginary apotheosis of the future that was at hand, and of the deeds that it had *in petto* but which it did not yet want to bring to the scratch.

Now, as Marx said then, "the days are gone by when the cackling of geese could save the Capitol."

SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE

DRAMA

ALL of those concerned in "The Golden Journey" (Booth Theater) seem to have worked almost too hard. At least one of them, the director, Harry Wagstaff Gribble, is an expert in his line, and if doing one's best went as far toward making a good artist as it is said to go toward the making of a good man, then the piece would deserve high praise. The author not only tries to be funny but tries to be funny every minute and arranges for someone to fall down or pull someone else's hair whenever nothing else is happening. The actors act all over the place, and just to show that they are not sparing themselves, rush back and forth across the stage even if there is no very good reason for doing so. In addition, two goldfish, a canary, two dogs, a monkey, and a macaw are introduced at various points, thanks to an ingenious dramatic device which provides that any animal commonly stocked by the pet shops can be appropriately introduced at any moment. Unfortunately, however, the tale of three young would-be writers who are living on nothing a week in a rather handsome apartment is neither very convincing nor very pointed.

Several times it looks as though the author might be meaning to say that his protagonists are preposterous frauds typical of post-depression decadence. Several other times it looks as though he might be meaning to say that the *vie de Bohème* is still going on. In the end it is evident that he is not meaning to say anything at all. Perhaps it was only because under such circumstances one is grateful for small favors, but Leona Powers seemed quite good as the publisher's wife with a talent for making gigolos out of aspiring authors, and Raymond Bramley seemed amusing in a wildly farcical way as the publisher himself.

Many plays are now on the eve of production, but at the present writing the theatergoer can do no better than to stick to the D'Oyly Carte Company, which is continuing at the Martin Beck and which reached new heights with "The Yeomen of the Guard." Probably none of the other Gilbert and Sullivan operas brings any company quite so surely to the test. It hasn't the unquenchable gaiety, the jigging, self-sustaining vivacity of some of the other more popular pieces. As a matter of fact, it is almost somber; it neither sings nor acts itself, and those who have heard it only in mediocre performances may wonder why devotees sometimes declare it the finest of the operas. But the preference is not hard to understand when it

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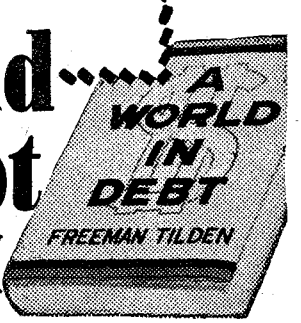

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is given as the D'Oyly Carte Company gives it—with vocal perfection and a very high degree of dramatic skill.

Undoubtedly Gilbert was indulging in a bit of not too obviously appropriate self-pity in his conception of Jack Point, the tragic jester. He may himself have had a broken heart, but he was certainly not unappreciated or unrewarded, and the character could easily be maudlin. Martyn Green, however, is superb. It is the best of his impersonations so far, and it is very rare indeed to find anyone who can dance, sing, and act, all nearly equally well. Gilbert and Sullivan were always demanding that almost unrealizable combination of talents, but it is not often that their unreasonable demands are so adequately met. Special praise is also due to Marjorie Eyre, especially for her singing of "Were I Thy Bride," one of the loveliest, though not one of the most obvious, of all Sullivan's melodies.

"Iolanthe," my own particular favorite, is current this week.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FILMS

Stationary War

"THE ROAD TO GLORY" (Twentieth Century) illustrates once more a defect in the Western Front as material for fiction in any form. Once more a war is going on in which there are no battles. Millions of men are in a deadlock the monotony of which may best be expressed by saying that both the noise and the danger are constant. The story can neither rise nor fall to a climax, just as it can have no hero and just as it can have no end. Movement, the life blood of story, can be only illusory here, where to be sure trenches are occupied and reoccupied and individuals go once in a while to incidental death, but where there can be no movement in the large sense necessary to drama. This is why "The Road to Glory," like "All Quiet on the Western Front" and "Journey's End," is ultimately depressing in spite of the fact that for an hour and a half it seems to be and is exciting. The excitement of the spectator is never healthy. It feeds his claustrophobia and is fed by it, the result being in fact a sort of madness in the mind which corresponds to the madness of the theme and which if prolonged would grow intolerable. The emotions involved are the last thing from liberating; the soul goes on no journey.

If this is true it is most true where motion pictures are concerned. The capacity of the sound film for reproducing the pandemonium of a European war is fatally great; we are no sooner convinced that we have never heard so authentic a barrage as this one in "The Road to Glory" than we are reminded in a new degree of the meaninglessness of all such things. So too with the other properties which Mr. Sherriff has made traditional: the neurotic captain, the enlisted man who reads irrelevant letters from home, and the dugout which for everybody is a living grave. T. S. Eliot recently dismissed the kind of war we have today as "degrading." It was both an aesthetic and a moral judgment, and hence applicable here. The story of a war without movement is a story without morality, which is to say without meaning.

Mr. Eliot presumably prefers an older kind of war; and, leaving aside the question whether any kind is desirable in

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nature, it does seem plain that only the mobile kind is desirable in art. "The Last of the Mohicans" (Rivoli) makes the difference felt at once. It is a relatively inept film, with a great many incredible Indians in it and with a bulky fable which it is not always careful to keep clear. But Cooper's very noble narrative instinct drove him to occupy a large area with figures and forces the significance of whose comings and goings cannot be questioned; and the American forest which he bequeathed to all romancers after him is undeniably here. The British army, the French army, the self-interested settlers, and of course the Indians compose a moving background against which Hawkeye (Randolph Scott) can serve freely and spaciously as the hero that fiction was created to have; and the death of the Colonel at Fort William Henry is a human event, as nobody's death is in "The Road to Glory." "The Road to Glory" is a better picture of its kind, and for the moment tells a more exciting story; but the kind is not so good, nor, since it is incapable of development, can it be said to have so much future.

"The General Died at Dawn" (Paramount) is set in contemporary China, where the war lord Yang (Akim Tamiroff) and the young American champion of oppressed provinces (Gary Cooper) fight it out over a wide field of intrigue. Clifford Odets, who wrote the scenario, has therefore not been trenchbound; and the result of his collaboration with the camera is a superior film, continuously interesting and often quite genuinely terrible. He has, however, made a number of minor mistakes; as when he puts into the wry mouth of his American hero pious words that do not belong there, and as when he lets his love story lapse into the commonplace. He may very well have lacked a free hand with the love story, but it is doubtful that anyone in Hollywood directed him to write the set speeches. They are right, but this charming and modest fellow would not have said them. Fortunately the war lord does not understand himself so well; it is he who merely by continuing to be himself carries the excellent moral with which Mr. Odets has been concerned.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Letters to the Editors

Horace as Reformer

Dear Sirs: Alvin Johnson's review of the Modern Library edition of Horace, in your issue of August 29, admirable as it is in many respects, shows quite clearly the danger of passing judgment on any poet without proper consideration of his age and environment. Surely any comment on Horace's attitude toward slavery should begin with mention of the fact that Horace was the son of a man who had been a slave. If his acceptance of the institution of slavery seems too complaisant, would it not be well to remind the reader that Roman law provided a certain safety valve for the injustice of slavery, namely, the fact that a slave could be set free, and that thereby he became a Roman citizen, subject to few if any disabilities?

To say without reservation that Horace "accepts the existing situation," merely because his book is generous to overflowing with the joy of transitory pleasures and delight in simple things, is to see but a part of the picture.

The outstanding fact of Horace's first thirty years of life was a world torn asunder by civil wars; and the outstanding cause of those civil wars, a cause cited almost without exception by every contemporary historian, was greed—greed for wealth which passed imperceptibly into greed for power. Exploitation of the provinces brought much capital to Rome. Capital was most safely invested in land. The dispossessed, unable to compete with the slave labor on the large estates, flocked to Rome to swell the ever-growing mass of *clientes*. This large restless body of unemployed and propertyless men proved an easy prey to the demagogic appeal of adventurers in search of an army. From Marius and Sulla through Catiline to Caesar and Octavian the broad outlines were the same. The army followed the leader who promised most, and significantly what was most frequently asked and promised was land. The result was civil war.

It is in the light of these conditions that Horace is to be read. Why is it that again and again, in Odes as well as in Satires, the extreme from which Horace wishes to turn men proves to be the extreme of wealth? Nor can it be wholly accidental that these Odes are all contained in a book which begins with a cry of protest against the folly and destruction of civil war. Indeed, Horace's preoccupation with this vice is to be explained only by the experience of the times and the fact that, far from lacking even "a scintilla of social sense," he was deeply concerned for his fellow-men.

To say that Horace was "not a reformer, even in his most unguarded moment," is strangely to misread his moralizings and to mistake the function of his satire. If Horace was no reformer, then neither were the muckrakers of the first decade of our century. That Horace was fully aware of the social consequences of avaricious accumulation, apart from the issue of civil war, and was deeply moved by them is apparent from the Seventeenth Ode of Book II, with its picture of the peasant driven from the farm, clasping his household gods to his breast and followed by his wife and ragged children, all because a greedy patron coveted their lands.

JOHN BRIDGE

Greenwich, Conn., September 15

Abortion Is a Serious Business

Dear Sirs: This is a long overdue comment on Louis Fischer's article on abortion in Russia in *The Nation* of July 25. I was much amused to think Mr. Fischer could write such a glorification of what after all must be a rather unpleasant experience. It might interest some of your readers to know that when I was in Russia during the summer of 1925 I heard a great many Russian physicians and women leaders comment on the abortion situation. The general opinion seemed to be that while abortion in individual cases might be desirable, its unregulated practice was taking a frightful toll in the health of women.

The usual comment was that during the hardest years following the revolution the practice of abortion was economically justifiable, since food was so scarce and the problem of an additional child was often almost tragic. Today there is almost no such justification. Obviously no one could wish the enormous birth-rate of pre-revolutionary times to prevail. But isn't it rather far-fetched to promote abortion as a means of birth control?

MABEL A. ELLIOTT

Lawrence, Kan., September 4

Dakota Has Shakespeare!

Dear Sirs: I write to object! Dakota wants Shakespeare? Surely, but why single out Dakota in the heading of your editorial, in *The Nation* of September 12, which says nothing about Dakota? Omaha is in Nebraska.

The implication is, of course, that Dakota is culturally illiterate. At Jamestown, North Dakota, each year the Jamestown College students present a Shakespearean play for townspeople and students. In addition, a small but competent troupe of Shakespearean players has visited the community at least two or three times during the last six or seven years.

Not only do we have Shakespeare in Dakota; we also have grand opera. Presentation of a standard work is the major project of the music department of Jamestown College each year.

HAROLD V. KNIGHT

Jamestown, N. D., September 20

Only a Few of Them Left

Dear Sirs: I do not miss a single issue of *The Nation* and one of these days I will send you my yearly subscription. . . .

I have just received a letter from the Republican National Committee asking me to become chairman of a taxpayers' division in my county. I thought you might be interested in my reply:

> I am sorry to decline your above kind offer. I was associated with the Republican Party in this county for several years until I discovered that it was operated by William Randolph Hearst and the international-banking racketeers. In 1932 I switched over to the Democratic Party. The only fault I find with the New Deal is that it does not go far enough with its program. . . . I do not know whom to suggest to fill the above place in this county. Outside of the few financiers in the county I do not know of a single Republican left.

H. O. EKERN

Thompson Falls, Mont., September 10

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